

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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### New coup in Bolivia

Last Thursday's overthrow of the government of Walter Guevara Arze by a sector of the army headed by Col. Alberto Natusch Busch has thrown the imperialist strategy for Bolivia into confusion and opened a period of acute political conflict.

The overthrow of rightist Guevara Arze was in itself by no means unexpected.

#### Dress rehearsal

The military had already run an uncertain dress rehearsal two weeks before when an isolated jungle garrison 'proclaimed' in defence of ex-dictator Banzer—who was being tried for treason by the newly elected congress.

Commander-in-Chief General David Padilla was then able to isolate the rising.

But the bulk of the armed forces were clearly greatly alarmed at the growing militancy of the working class after the July elections and the pitiful incapacity of the bourgeois politicians to share the spoils of power in an organised manner and control the masses.

Both of the two wings of the MNR (the petty bourgeois nationalist party that came to power after the 1952 Revolution) failed to gain an absolute majority in the election.

The upshot was that Guevara was appointed as interim president by the Bolivian Congress until yet further elections could be held which would resolve the impasse.

In the 86 days of his rule Guevara—the 'constitutional' president for whom not a single person had cast a vote—attempted to establish an independent power base through a series of manoeuvres that would allow him to extend his term until 1981.

#### General strike

This drew growing opposition from Congress and the COB (the Bolivian TUC) which last week announced a 24-hour general strike against Guevara's plans to delay elections.

Guevara's antics were also too much for the leadership of the MNR-Autentico the wing of the MNR which had served under Banzer and had grown used to exercising power on the backs of the military.

Two members who have a particularly long history of imperialist conspiracy, Guillermo Bedregal and Jose Fellmann Velarde, cast around for a suitable military *gorila* to hoist them back into power and eliminate the threat of the miners and the organised working class.

Cont'd page 3, col 1.

## £3.6 billion Tory cuts package announced



Architects of cuts: Thatcher, Biffen and Lawson

New charges for school meals, milk and transport; another rundown in the NHS, and another massive leap in prescription charges; a huge 7% cut in local authority social services; rising travel costs, rates, rents and prices; and 21,000 more teachers on the dole. These are just some of the main effects of the Tories' latest £3.6 billion spending cuts. They admit that unemployment next year will rise by at least 300,000. So, to keep workers' resistance in check, they are INCREASING spending on two items — "law and order" and the armed forces.

# ALL OUT NOV 28! PREPARE NATIONAL STRIKE!



The Thatcher government's latest package of savage spending cuts—which will hit every working class man, woman and child in the country—has produced a predictable blast of hot air from Labour politicians, union leaders and welfare groups.

But amid all their varied sounds of protest and indignation there is no hint of a policy that can defend jobs and living standards against the Tory attack.

TUC leaders have waxed eloquent over the Tories' "ludicrous" plans, their "robbing the poor" and their supposed "breach of faith".

The NUPE Executive has even noisily pledged to conduct a "militant" campaign of "non-cooperation" with the latest cuts—stopping short of all-out strike action.

But for the Tory government, such verbal protests are

simply water off a duck's back.

They have never pretended that their starting point is the problems of the poor, the homeless, the old, the sick or the unemployed: rather as the party of big business, the Tories start from the gathering world recession within which the profitability of British capitalism is continuing to decline.

#### Driven to the wall

To boost the profits of the strongest sections of capital, their weaker competitors must be driven to the wall; profitable sections of state-owned industry must be sold off; and taxes on profits, dividends and top salaries must be cut to a minimum.

Savage public spending cuts are an integral part of this programme.

But while the Tories, conscious of their task, go to work, the protests from Labour politicians are lacking in any such determination or conviction.

While Labour was in office Callaghan and Healey themselves started not from the needs of the working class but from the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and efforts to restore profitability to British industry, in the hopes of a few reforms in the future.

It is easy for them now to turn round and attack the Tories. But every worker knows that most of today's closures of schools, hospitals and nurseries are the result of Labour's spending cuts.

And Labour's right wing leaders remain firmly opposed to mass working class action to bring down the Thatcher government.

Yet this offers the only way forward in the struggle to defend jobs and social services.

A lobby of Parliament against the cuts has been called on November 28 by Yorkshire trades councils, and endorsed by the Labour NEC. It must be made a massive indication of workers' readiness to fight. Workers throughout the

public sector and wherever possible in private industry should fight for *strike action* on that day as part of the fight to transform the anti-Tory speeches of the labour leaders into practical action.

Labour MPs who declare themselves against the cuts must be called upon to fight explicitly for the restoration of all cuts and for the protection of the public services against inflation through a *sliding scale of public spending*.

Such a policy flies in the face of the pro-capitalist policies of the Callaghan-Healey leadership. Those who oppose the cuts must therefore be called upon also to campaign throughout the labour movement for the *removal* of Callaghan, and for a programme of socialist policies to defend the working class.

#### Occupation

But of course the main struggles will not be in Parliament.

The key to stopping the

Tory cuts is the fight in the unions at local, area and national level for occupations and strikes against sackings, cut-backs and closures wherever they occur.

The demand must be in each case that public sector union leaders call all-out *national strike action* in defence of jobs and services.

#### Bring down Thatcher

Such action, if linked to other coming struggles against the Tories could create the conditions for the *general strike* that is needed to bring down the Thatcher government and force to office a government responsive to the needs of the working class.

To prepare for such struggles and fight uncompromisingly at every level for the independent interests of the working class, a new, revolutionary leadership is vital.

The Workers Socialist League is fighting to construct such a leadership.

# Spanish trial shows face of oppression

The trial of eleven women in Bilbao for 'abortion practices' is one of the most gruesome examples of the legal and domestic oppression of Spanish women.

A campaign in support of the accused has been mounted by left parties and women's organisations.

1,300 women, including theatre and cinema personalities, political figures and many ordinary working class women signed a declaration which admitted that they too had had abortions—illegal under any circumstances in Spain.

A series of public demonstrations, marches, meetings and sit-ins have taken place in all the major cities, and these have been attracting increasingly violent attention from the armed forces.

The governing Centre Democratic Union (UCD) of Adolfo Suarez is in the forefront of these attacks on women's rights.

But the trial has also opened the way for the openly fascist right wing to give full reign to its hysteria.

El Alcazar dedicated its front page to denouncing abortion as 'barbarism' and 'murder' and actually attacks the government for being too soft and 'afloat on a sea of subversion'.

Madrid's Monday Bulletin declares that these women represent a 'despotism which will finish democracy', and that 'not even the penal system can deal with these women'.

These statements are a culmination of a series of remarks from conservative and right

wing sectors which attribute the supposed sexual immorality to the 'transition to democracy' after Franco's death.

General Jaime Milans del Bosch publicly declared that this process was responsible for 'disorder and pornography'.

Socialist Press has never accepted that the democratic facade set up after Franco's death—which has left Franco's repressive apparatus intact—is equivalent to a bourgeois democratic state.

Sections of the 'progressive' bourgeoisie are of course anxious to ameliorate an extremely unsteady political situation and pave the way towards entry to the EEC by attempting to broaden the democratic base of their anti-worker government.

However, traditional business interests and sections of the armed forces and the police favour a less subtle form of control over the working class, a position which is amply illustrated in the open threats they have issued over the question of abortion and continual discussion of the prospects of a military coup by top generals.

The democratic rights of Spanish women can only be secured through mass working class action to bring down the reactionary Suarez regime and bring to power a workers government.

The fight for such action must include struggling for strike action in support of the Bilbao 11 and the placing of demands that the class collaborationist leaders of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party break from their search for a coalition deal with Suarez.

# Sandinistas declare war on left opponents

Reprinted from Labor News, paper of the Socialist League (Democratic Centralist) in the United States.

The Sandinista FSLN government in Nicaragua has begun a campaign against sections of the Nicaraguan trade union movement.

And it has taken steps to suppress the Revolutionary Marxist League, a Trotskyist organisation initially attached to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

This follows on the heels of the expulsion of the left wing Simon Bolivar Brigade organised by the Bolshevik Faction of the USFI.

The president of the Vendors Union of Managua, Ivan Soza Cerda and Armado Nurinda of the Milk Workers Union have both been kidnapped.

The FSLN Interior Minister, Commander Tomas Borge has publicly described the Trotsky-

ists as counter-revolutionaries equal to the Neo-Somozists, and announced measures against them.

Ivan Soza Cerda who is reported to be a member of the RML was taken by armed elements from his house in the eastern city of Granada and has not been heard from since.

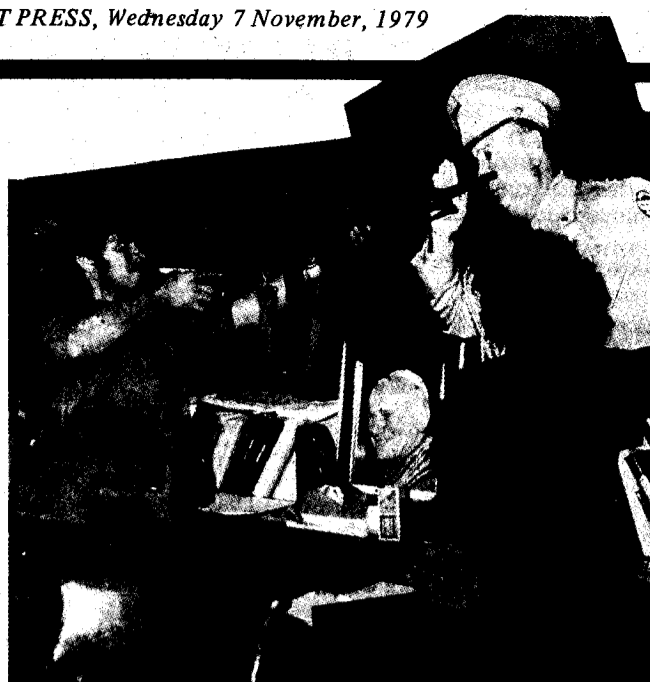
## Petition

On October 3 according to a report from Managua in Diario Las Americas, a right wing Cuban daily in Miami, a petition by some 200 Nicaraguan Trotskyists said that they feared for their lives and demanded that the Sandinista revolution convene a Constituent Assembly.

The Trotskyists according to the report said that many of them have been threatened with prison and told that their leader Ivan Soza Cerda is dead.



FSLN leaders with Panamanian president Royo



Sandinistas deface picture of Somoza in his captured bunker

The petition signatories also said that they are a sympathising section of the Fourth International which stands for the elimination of the bureaucracy and the total removal of the bourgeoisie in the organs of the Nicaraguan state.

They call for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly of workers and peasants that would have the capacity to express democratically what economic system should replace the system under Somoza.

The signers of the manifesto and petition finished their statement by declaring that the working class of Nicaragua has the capacity to fight for the uninterrupted revolution in Nicaragua and help in the formation of a World Workers Party.

The fact that these reports have virtually been blocked out of the American bourgeois press is an indication of two points.

First, "Diario Las Americas" is attempting to convince the Cuban community that the Sandinistas are upholders of the capitalist order in Nicaragua.

Secondly, the US bourgeoisie and the International Monetary Fund want to force the FSLN to the right and into complete submission to the dictates of the bankers by attacking it from the left.

Many major American banks have already withheld loans and the IMF's conditions for future loans to Nicaragua will require that all monies and interest owed on past loans to Somoza be paid up.

These conditions will without doubt lead to severe attacks against the workers and peasants of Nicaragua if they are carried out.

In order to prevent any

opposition from the working class and peasants in the future, the FSLN is already ordering the disarming of "all persons not participating in the Army or Militias."

These are under the direct control of the FSLN.

## Castro

The next move of the FSLN will probably be the banning of the militias and block committees, particularly if they receive any opposition from these organisations to their policies.

The FSLN has also had the complete support of Castro in its every move. Castro has lined up with Portillo, Mexican bourgeois president, and other bourgeois nationalists in Latin America in making sure that the revolution continues to have a bourgeois character.

According to Castro, socialism is not necessary in Nicaragua in order to carry the revolution forward.

Instead the FSLN should "do their own thing" whatever that means.

Castro has followed this up in his speech at the United Nations where he called for a redistribution of the wealth of the world—without a socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.

## Statesman

He then followed this up with a dinner for Barbara Walters and other "honest" TV and newspaper executives and announced that in his last visit to the US he was a revolutionary but "now I'm a statesman". Castro certainly doesn't mince words.

In the most grotesque display of degeneration; the American Socialist Workers Party in its paper, *The Militant*, and *Intercontinental Press* has applauded every act and statement of the FSLN and Castro including the expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade by the FSLN and Castro's open political support for Portillo and other Latin American bourgeois nationalists.

Not only has this "Trotskyist" party supported the suppression of the left and its own comrades but it has also defended private control of the economy in that country.

In the October 8 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Fred Murphy supports workers' control of a school "as long as it takes to get the back wages paid". This according to Murphy and the FSLN leadership is assuring that the workers needs are met.

## Conscious blackout

Again in Murphy's article there is full support for the suppression of the "ultra left and sectarians" while absolutely no mention of the Nicaraguan Trotskyist movement which until the overthrow of Somoza was a section of the USFI.

This conscious blackout is extremely significant.

In order to develop a "supportive" relationship with the FSLN, Murphy and the SWP are prepared to allow the jailing and murder of their own supporters without a protest.

This is all in the interest of course of fighting the "ultra left disruption".

SWP members in the US must seriously begin to ask themselves what kind of organisation that they are in that would support the expulsion, jailing and murder of their own "supporters". The Socialist League condemns this flagrant and criminal policy of the SWP.

# Khomeini forced to retreat

Ayatollah Khomeini has been forced to beat a humiliating retreat on one front of his holy war against revolutionary struggle in Iran.

Despite the invasion of Kurdistan by Khomeini's army, brutal repression by the Islamic militia and the murders organised by the hangman Khalkali, the Kurdish nationalist movement has asserted its power and forced the 'Revolutionary Council' to admit its own weakness.

Armed militants from the bourgeois Kurdish Democratic Party and the Fedayeen have recaptured Mahabad and other major towns from the government forces.

## Starvation

While the army is still imposing a blockade which threatens to bring starvation to the towns of Kurdistan, Khomeini's generals are powerless and despairing before the rising power of the Kurdish rebellion.

But even as the Ayatollahs were agreeing to send a delegation to discuss terms with the KDP leaders, the Kurdish bourgeois nationalists themselves were confronted by mass opposition.

Their ceasefire with Khomeini's army has been ignored by left-wing forces, while a mass rally in Mahabad against the government was attended by thousands—despite a KDP call for a boycott as a gesture of peaceful intentions.

## Peace mission

Such demonstrations of militancy create difficult conditions for the KDP to negotiate a sellout deal with the 'peace mission' of government ministers.

Khomeini's climbdown on Kurdistan is the sharpest expression of the disorientation which is besetting his drive to impose a stable dictatorship on the Iranian masses through the medium of the Islamic clergy.

On the one hand, the militias and tribunals formed in support of the 'Islamic revolution' against the Shah are refusing to surrender their authority to a central power and continue to defy instructions (even from Khomeini himself) to moderate their reactionary zeal.

## Regrouping

Factional struggles also continue within the religious hierarchy.

At the same time, the forces of the left are regrouping, despite repression and censor-

ship, as popular disillusion with the regime increases.

The storming of the US embassy shows the extent of Khomeini's problems.

The army and Islamic militia dared not intervene to protect the servants of imperialism from this attack, and Khomeini himself swiftly exploited the situation to splash some fresh gloss on his dowdy anti-imperialist credentials.

It is of course very possible that the whole flamboyant incident was staged by Khomeini's supporters to serve the purpose of diverting the attention of workers away from their continued exploitation and reviving the class confusion of the struggles to overthrow the Shah.

But the fact that Khomeini must resort to such methods reveals the crisis of his rule—a crisis which the religious leaders no longer have the power to control by themselves.



# Zimbabwe march



Zimbabwe National Demonstration, Sunday November 11, London Assemble: 1.30, Speakers Corner, march to Trafalgar Square rally.

# KLAN KILLING

Four people were shot down by Ku Klux Klan gunmen on Saturday during a rally organised by the Maoist Workers Voice group in Greenboro, North Carolina, in the Southern USA.

Maoist leader Paul Bermanzohn had challenged the gun-toting Klansmen to "face the wrath of the people". He had called them cowards.

Brave as the demonstrators' position is, there is no way forward in challenging the Klan to shoot-outs.

Certainly the nature of the Klan has been exposed to the

whole world on their TV screens.

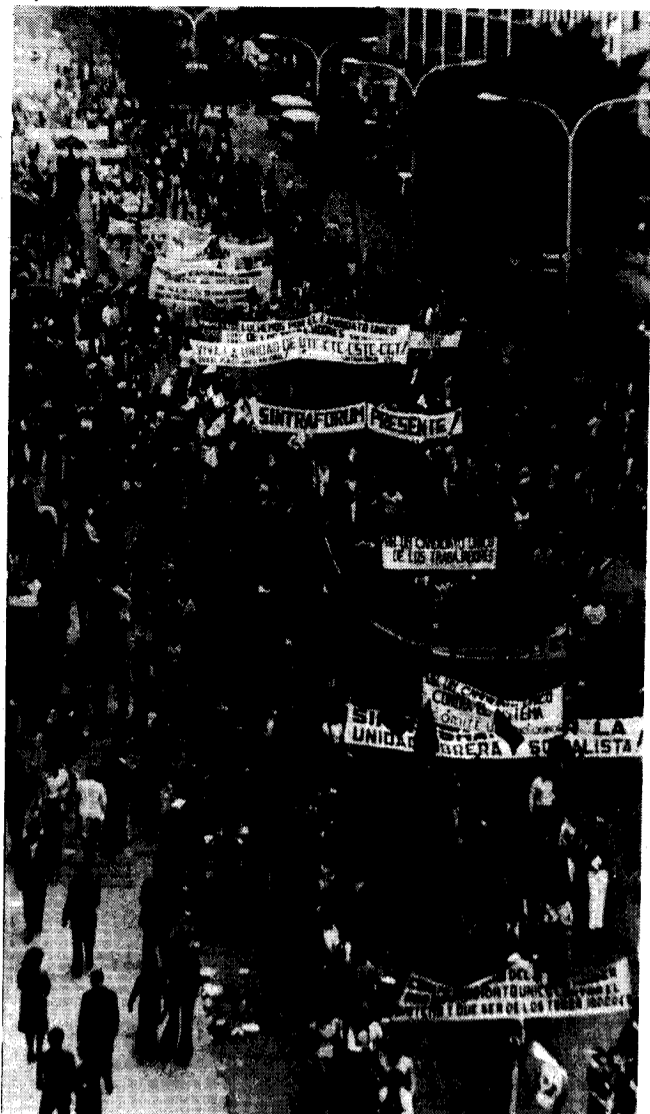
But the moral indignation that this brings in no way solves the problem the US labour movement faces from the many different forms of neo-fascists.

The lessons must be that the only way they can be fought is by the organised labour movement, not a substitutionist group.

From within the labour movement workers defence squads must be developed to defend black communities, demonstrations and picket lines.



# Mass frame-up trial in Colombia



Colombian workers demonstrate

At a time when the trial of six dissidents in Prague has been given generous press coverage by the self-styled 'human rights' lovers of the western mass media, a show-trial of 382 people on charges of 'subversion' in Colombia has not merited a single line.

The reason for this is that Colombia is supposedly a "democracy"—though one, let it be said, where the Liberal and Conservative parties have had a formal agreement to take turns governing the country and to share administrative posts for a twenty year period.

On paper this arrangement ended in 1974 but in fact continues to exist. Abstentionism at the polls has increased to the point where President Turbay Ayala's ruling Liberal party received barely 15% of the vote.

This deal was struck after La Violencia, the Violence, a civil war provoked by the Liberal and Conservative parties in which an estimated 300,000 people, mainly peasants, lost their lives and gained nothing.

The 382 persons now accused are alleged to have belonged to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, (FARC), the National Liberation Army, (ELN) and the April 19 Revolution Movement (M19).

## State of siege

This last group is widely suspected of having been infiltrated by the CIA because of its provocative tactics and its criminal negligence in carrying them out.

But the mass arrests also include liberals and people sympathetic to the left who have no involvement with the foquistas (guevarists).

A state of siege has been operating in Colombia for 30 years, recently given even sharper teeth by President Turbay's Security Statute.

This decrees that the accused have committed a crime against the state and they must therefore be tried by military rather than civilian courts.

Some of the other more bizarre features of the Statute is its invention of new crimes such as "occupying a public or private place with intent to put pressure on the authorities".

This is punishable with a year in gaol, with no right of appeal.

It is also illegal to publish or broadcast information relating to a disturbance of public order 'so long as the disturbance persists'.

Army officers and police inspectors are now empowered to impose prison terms of up to one year for certain offences and again there is no right of

appeal.

The 382 are to be tried in specially-erected marquees in the courtyards of the 'Modelo' and 'La Picota' prisons.

## Secret charges

The defence lawyers will find it difficult to gain access to the marquees since it will be necessary to get specially authorised security clearances to enter each prison.

And restrictions on the information available to defence counsel mean that the defendants face effectively a trial on secret charges and with secret evidence, in which there is no obligation to consider the reply of the defence!

While rights are under fire, the economic picture is no less depressing for those who do not form part of the governing elite.

Colombia has almost ceased to produce oil and has been paying for its new energy bill by saving on wages.

Wages are now lower than they were in 1970, and all this is taking place under an expanding economy.

The rise in the international price of coffee, the main export, took the Colombian economy into a period of expansion which is now expected to last until 1982.

## Unemployment

However the situation in the labour intensive manufacturing industry has brought increasing unemployment.

The government has recently restricted credit facilities which has forced expanding business sectors to look to the multi-million illegal marijuana export industry for loans.

This means extremely high interest rates, which in turn push up prices and make Colombian goods hard to sell both at home and abroad.

The recent lifting of import controls also restricts the market for Colombian manufactured products and once again pushes up unemployment.

The capitalists have of course been protected, by a tax reform which eliminates the progressive increase of tax on income in relation to capital gains.

In general the economic policies of the government favour finance capitalists and the agricultural sectors at the expense of the manufacturing industries.

A general strike in 1977 achieved none of its demands but militancy has continued unabated although disorganised even though the President has the power to declare illegal any strike which 'damages the normal running of the country'.

## Illegal

Naturally most strikes are declared illegal.

The trade union bureaucracy participates in a tripartite National Wages Council at the beck and call of government and business interests.

This council last met in May at the request of business sectors who feared a recession and wanted to reactivate the economy by raising wages and thus increasing consumption.

However, the frosts which destroyed part of the Brazilian coffee harvest gave the economy an unexpected boost and killed off the meeting and any 'wage rise from above'.

The refusal of the trade union leaders to coordinate effective strike action has condemned workers to continue their struggle against military and economic repression in this 'democracy', without any

# Bolivia coup

From front page

They quickly settled upon Colonel Natusch Busch, who had once been Banzer's minister of agriculture and peasant affairs.

Natusch was already established as a prominent right wing figure within the army and had an important base of support in the peasant organisations of the fertile Cochabamba valley.

Natusch was recently described by a diplomat as "an ambitious alcoholic whose chief aim is to seize power for himself and retire a whole generation of officers who prevented colonels like himself from advancing to the rank of general".

## Open secret

These qualities are far from rare in the Bolivian army.

The leader of the MNR-Autentico, Victor Paz Estenssoro, joined with his cronies in actively encouraging Natusch, and the conspiracy became almost an open secret.

Guevara knew about it at least three weeks ago, and his son predicted the timing of the coup to within twelve hours.

When Paz was summoned to the palace to explain his behaviour he denied complicity—claiming that 'democracy is a nice thing to have around'.

There is a certain attention to form in the 'high' politics of Bolivia.

Guevara was palpably unable to arrest Natusch and knew perfectly well that Paz would continue to plot and bargain until the bitter end.

Accordingly the President set about rearranging his cabinet to include Paz's men as well as the supporters of the other wing of the MNR, who were backed by a different sector of the army.

## Unholy alliance

Guevara preferred to entice supporters of Banzer into the government and preside over an unholy alliance, preserving the

last vestiges of 'democracy' in the face of the consolidation of the right.

The resulting confusion proved too much for the military high command and they settled on a policy of supporting the first army leader that made a move.

## General strike

It was, unsurprisingly, Natusch. But the colonel, fully aware of the growing strength and militancy of the working class, immediately announced his new regime to be "a popular force for left nationalism" which would respect trade union and democratic rights, maintain parliament and even appoint a leading member of the miners union (FSTMB) as manager of the state mining corporation COMIBOL.

This ambitious scenario lasted a mere twelve hours and was brought to an abrupt end by a surprise statement of full support for Guevara by Congress and the declaration of the COB general strike—against the coup and "in defence of democracy".

As of Saturday November 3 La Paz is completely closed down, the mines idle and large parts of the country at a standstill.

## Mass opposition

The students immediately occupied the university and large crowds came into the streets to demonstrate against the army. The troops replied with gunfire. A score of people were killed and many more wounded.

Although there has been no sustained fighting, the mass opposition has immediately weakened Natusch's position.

Four members of the new cabinet have gone into hiding and even Paz has disowned his hireling; Congress is continuing to meet secretly; and significant sectors of the military (including the powerful Grupo Gener-



Soldiers fire on crowds in La Paz

acional) are reported to be in discussions with Guevara, who has gone so far as to call for an indefinite general strike in opposition to the coup.

## Hostile

Perhaps most important of all, the US imperialists sensed the extent of the hostile mass movement.

They have felt obliged to defend their 'democratic' experiment in concrete terms by

cutting all economic and military aid, which amounts to \$60 millions.

Hence, while on the surface Natusch retains control and has the nominal support of the major garrisons, in fact matters are very much in flux.

If the military splits, which is possible, this may leave the way open for the construction of a bonapartist regime under guise of 'revolutionary nationalism' similar to that of General Juan Jose Torres in the pre-revolutionary period of October 1970 to August 1971.

But equally, the extraordinarily rapid failure of the imperialist experiment with constitutionalism in Bolivia by no means puts out of count other sorts of revamped populist and reformist endeavours on the part of the bourgeoisie.

## Vital role

Appreciable sectors, including the powerful group around the MNRI of Hernan Siles Suazo have so far been able to distance themselves from attachments with the dictatorship.

Under these conditions, the attitude of the COB and the strategy it adopts for the general strike will play a vital role in the coming days.

It is crucial that while resisting Natusch and his coup there is no bloc formed with Guevara and his bourgeois colleagues.

In this the practical role of Bolivian Trotskyists who are in



Padilla



Morales



The Conference platform at Digbeth

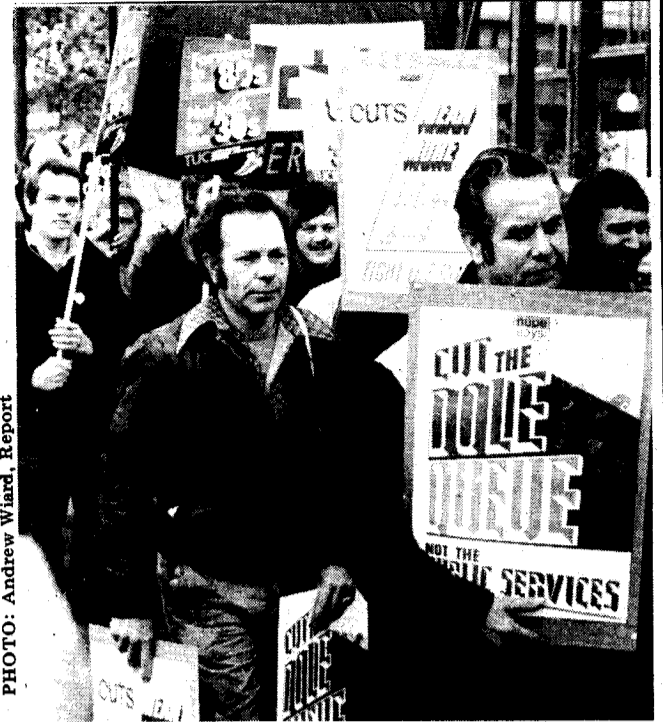


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

The cuts struggle featured prominently on the agenda

# A political lead to anti-Tory struggles

This conference recognises capitalism is gripped by a deep, international economic and political crisis.

The election of the Tory government in Britain coincided with a sharpening of this crisis on an international scale.

The reaction of the new right wing Tory administration to this was to make systematic preparation for class war against the working class.

In her first weeks as Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher presided over big pay rises for the army, the police, the Judges and the top civil servants. She followed this with huge tax concessions to the middle class and professional people.

Thatcher was marshalling her forces for good reason. The Tories are class conscious. They understand the capitalist economic crisis as a crisis of profitability.

They are convinced that it can only be tackled in one way—by increasing the rate of exploitation of the working class.

## Major cutbacks

To achieve this they have launched an attack on every aspect of workers' living standards.

They propose major cutbacks in education; the demolition of the National Health Service and other social services and the selling of council houses.

They propose to hold down wages, break down working conditions and force in speed up by a straight "lame duck" policy

We reprint here the text of the resolution adopted by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement Anti-Tory Conference at Digbeth Hall, Birmingham on Saturday November 3.

designed to force employers to attack the workforce in order to survive.

They have removed any form of price control and let inflation rip in order to reduce the value of wages and put pressure on the home market. They have raised the Minimum Lending Rate in order to force up the pound and put similar pressure on the export markets.

Alongside this they have decided that very large areas of manufacturing industry in Britain must be completely destroyed.

Basic engineering capacity is to be reduced, particularly in shipbuilding and steel production.

In British Leyland the Edwardes plan—far from being a "survival" plan—is part of a plan designed to run down BL in successive "slimming down" operations with the eventual destruction of up to one million jobs in BL and component manufacture.

The Tories plan asset-

stripping on a grand scale and the hiving off of large parts of nationalised industry.

To facilitate the redistribution of manufacturing industry on an international scale they have now removed currency exchange controls for the first time for 42 years in order to give capitalists complete freedom to move their capital around at will.

Whilst carrying out these measures they are preparing a battery of anti-trade union legislation designed to strengthen the hand of the employers and the government when workers fight against these measures or struggle for wage increases.

They are to tighten their racialist Immigration Act and continue the imprisonment and torture of republicans in the North of Ireland.

The Tories draw strength from the policies and actions of the Labour government before them. Many Tory policies have carried on where Callaghan and Healey left off.

This is a part of the crisis of leadership from which the working class suffer every day of their lives. The working class is strong.

They have shown it in their response to the national engineering strikes, through which they gained an important breakthrough in hours and holidays.

They have shown it in the 13 week strike of Talbot workers which was ruthlessly betrayed by the national officials.

## Political question

But militancy is not enough. Leadership is a political question.

The vast majority of trade union leaders are tied to the reformism of the Labour Party.

They refuse to challenge capitalism as a system. They try to fill the rotten tooth rather than pull it out.

This renders them incapable of defending the working class.

When Edwardes claimed that

# CBI's gloomy forecast

Even before the announcement of the Tories' latest £3.6 billion spending cuts, British employers have shown the impact of the gathering recession.

A CBI survey of 1,800 manufacturing companies revealed a staggering 70% holding order books with only four months' work or less—an increase of 4% since July.

41% of firms were more pessimistic for the future, more are working below capacity, and others are junking investment plans.

Exports are on the slide as the pound rides high on the foreign exchange markets, while companies clobbered by soaring interest rates and falling markets are in an increasingly poor financial state.

Far from the Tory myth of tax handouts and spending cuts boosting the private sector, the CBI expects investment in manufacturing industry to fall by up to 5% next year. One third of the CBI-sur-

veyed firms had laid off workers in the last four months—and 37% expected to throw more on the dole in the next period.

For the employers of course, and those Labour and trade union leaders who accept their logic, the answer to this mounting recession is clear.

They argue that the working class—through sackings, speed-up and falling living standards—should suffer the full brunt of the crisis and sacrifice its own interests to preserve the profits of the capitalists.

Only by thus safeguarding the "viability" of private industry can any jobs be saved, they claim.

## Concessions

But in reality every time concessions are made by workers in the hopes of winning a respite from the capitalist crisis, a dangerous turn is made away from the necessity of confronting the employers.

There is no way the independent interests of the working class in Britain or in any other country can be secured through



Recessionary policies—Chancellor Howe

collaboration with a system so inherently chaotic that it is now closing down and clearly obstructing the necessary development of the forces of production, setting social progress in reverse.

Only a socialist planned economy, on a world scale, can now offer the working class the

prospect of an escape from the circle of speed-up, sackings and plunging living standards—because in only such an economy can the productive forces be expanded to satisfy the needs of the many rather than the profit lust of the tiny few.

BL was no longer viable they looked at it in capitalist terms and accepted the argument. The Confed then fought for the acceptance of 25,000 redundancies and the closure of 13 plants.

They are prepared to witch-hunt and attack those who fight for alternative policies.

In the public services where every section of the working class from the youth to the aged are under attack the union leaders are no better.

Verbal condemnation of the cuts goes hand in hand with no hint of real leadership or real resistance. Whilst they make their speeches, services are gone, wards closed, staff run down.

Part of the living standard of the working class is taken away, mass unemployment created and women are driven back into the home with no jobs, no nursery provision, no maternity leave and having to care for the sick and the aged as state provision is removed.

At the same time an attack is launched on the fight to free abortion on demand.

## Capitalism

What is needed is a leadership which starts, not from the problems of capitalism but from the requirements, the rights and the interests of the working class.

A leadership which points out that the economic crisis and inflation are not caused by the working class but by capitalism.

A leadership which is prepared to lead and has the necessary policies.

A leadership which says "open the books" and nationalise when an employer claims to be bankrupt; which says occupy when they close factories; which fights day in and day out against every job loss in the hospitals, every ward closure, every cut back in the school meals service or abolition of a nursery class; a leadership that will fight for a sliding scale of wages—1% rise in take-home wages for every 1% rise in the cost of living—as calculated by workers themselves in the form of committees of trade unionists and housewives, and oppose all reliance on the official Price Index and "threshold clauses"; and which will fight for councils of action to link struggles together and direct them politically to bring down the Tory government.

## General strike

It is vital that sectional disputes that take place around the anti-union laws and other Tory attacks are generalised and focussed on the goal of a general strike.

Councils of action should be fighting for and preparing to organise a general strike. To do this they must be rooted in the organisations of the working class as genuine rank and file workers.

They should ensure that all picket lines are defended by building units for physical defence, based both on the pickets or occupations that exist and on mobilising mass pickets of the labour movement.

A leadership must be constructed in such struggles that is prepared to lead the working class beyond the perspective of removing the Tory government simply to replace it by a Labour government which will again

seek to solve the crisis of profitability at the expense of the working class.

Through bodies of workers built in struggle—such as councils of action—this new leadership must be prepared to call for a workers' government to resolve the crisis of capitalism by ending capitalism itself.

## Action programme

The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement with its programme pledges itself to fight for this perspective and in this way.

We call upon those lefts in the Labour Party who claim to be fighting for democratic reform within the Labour Party to also fight for these demands—to align themselves with those who are prepared to fight for the independent interests of the working class.

As delegates and visitors to this conference we pledge ourselves to go back into our union branches, shop stewards committees and Labour Party wards and fight for the following action programme.

\*No talks with the Tories—force them out of office.

\*Remove Labour and trade union leaders who won't fight.

\*No Tory laws against the unions: prepare mass strike action.

\*Defend wages. Fight for cost of living clauses in all agreements.

\*Fight all cuts. Occupy with supporting strike action. Set up elected committees to examine the books of the public services. Set up workers' inquiries to examine health, social and welfare provision and establish the necessary programme of public works to meet the needs of the working class and combat unemployment.

\*For a restoration of all cuts and automatic increases in public spending to match inflation. An end to military spending and spending on police and other anti-working class bodies. Open the books of government departments and local authorities to workers' committees.

\*Unite strikes and occupations as a step towards forming councils of action.

\*Support the November 7 Lobby of Parliament called by Lambeth Council who have refused to implement the cuts or raise rents. Build for strike action on that day.

\*Support the November 28 Day of Action against the cuts. Turn one-day strikes into all-out action.

\*Support the February 5 Lobby of Parliament called by NAC against the Corrie Bill. Fight for strike action to defend and extend abortion rights.

\*Campaign throughout the trade unions and the labour movement for the policies of a) immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland; b) self-determination for the Irish people; c) the restoration of political status to Irish POWs preparatory to the release of republican prisoners; and d) the calling of a national labour movement conference on Ireland.

\*Oppose all immigration controls: no to the nationalist policy of import controls!

\*Intervene in the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) conference in January on the policies of the CDLM.

# CALLAGHAN PREPARED FOR PARTY SPLIT

Labour leader Callaghan is prepared to split the Party rather than risk the loss of control by his extreme right wing clique, whose base of support is the Parliamentary Labour Party and top union bureaucrats.

This is the unmistakable message from the manoeuvres of the last few weeks, in which Callaghan has been trying to repair the damage done to his authority by this year's Party conference.

There he failed in his bid to prevent democratic reforms being passed which pave the way for Party control over Labour's manifesto and the reselection of MPs.

Now Callaghan has pinned his hopes on the outcome of an all-embracing "inquiry" into the Party.

While right wingers loudly complained that the left-wing controlled NEC had "rigged" the inquiry (by electing five left wing representatives as its delegation) Callaghan set about rigging it by arbitrarily packing on right wingers from the PLP.

When the NEC rejected the manoeuvre, Callaghan set about challenging their decision, invoking a 3-line whip of Labour MPs on an irrelevant piece of Parliamentary business in order to achieve a substantial right wing vote at last week's PLP meeting.



Callaghan

But the ruse fell flat. 74 MPs ignored the desperation of Callaghan's plight, and failed to turn out to participate in the crucial vote, leaving the Party leader with an unconvincing 133 to 61 majority.

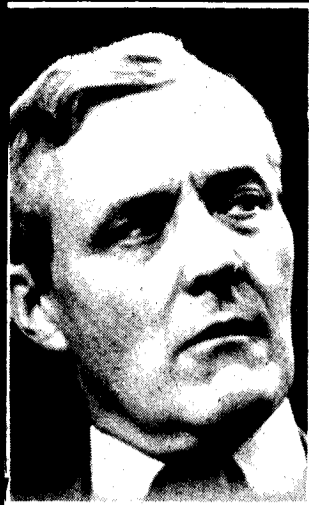
At the meeting, however, Callaghan pulled no punches in a vigorous witch-hunting speech which has since set the tone for his other public pronouncements.

Eric Heffer's pathetic bleats that such comments "are not helpful", and that the NEC had never attacked the party leadership the way Callaghan is now attacking the NEC were brushed aside.

Giving a hint of one line certain to be taken up by the Party inquiry, Callaghan angrily demanded to know why the NEC had not acted upon the witch-hunting Underhill report, which alleged growing "Trotskyist" activity in the ranks of the Labour Party.

But from the 'lefts' there is little but an embarrassed cough. Heffer was right. There never was—and still is not—any move by the Labour 'lefts' to kick out Callaghan or to offer a socialist alternative to his policies.

Callaghan has spelled out the stakes in the coming fight. Either the 'lefts' will have to cave in publicly to the right wing machine, or they must prepare to fight for Callaghan's removal—under conditions where he will go all-out to split the Party down the middle.



Benn

Dear Comrade Benn,  
In January 1979 I was expelled from the Labour Party. By only 37 votes to 35 the General Committee of Oxford constituency decided that because of my support for the policies put forward by *Socialist Press*, paper of the Workers Socialist League, I should not be allowed to continue membership of the Party.

I appealed against the decision and, on the basis of a

# Expelled socialist challenges Benn

## OPEN LETTER

petition which immediately gained thirty signatures from GC members, was able to organise a defence campaign from my union branch to fight for my reinstatement into the Labour Party.

### Appeal hearing

After many delays, mostly caused by the intervening General Election, an appeal hearing was arranged where I

could put my case and call witnesses in my defence. On the same day, hearings were also arranged for two other appeals by people who were refused membership of the Labour Party for the same reasons that I was expelled.

That it is a political witch-hunt of socialists and not a genuine concern that the Party's constitution had been breached was richly confirmed: not one single Labour Party rule

was I accused of breaking. Instead we had to listen to a torrent of abuse from those on the right wing of the Labour Party and trade union movement in Oxford.

### Delegate

I was a delegate on the Oxford GC from my trade union branch (ACTSS 5/833) which had consistently supported me, as have several wards in the constituency.

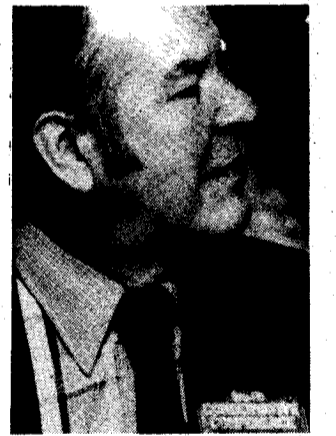
The appeals are to come up before the NEC in the very near future, where it would seem to be an opportune time for the NEC to take a stand against witch-hunts of this nature by recommending my reinstatement, and defending the right of those who fight for socialist policies against the anti-working class policies practised by the last Labour government.

It was while fighting for a resolution which called for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership and calling for an Emergency Labour Party Conference in the event of an election last autumn that the accusations began to fly.

In one of the meetings you addressed at Brighton you said, "I don't want to chase anyone out of the Labour Party. I want to bring them in, bring in their knowledge, their analysis, their dedication." And in another you said it was not "entryism" you feared, but "exitism" from the Labour Party.

If socialists are allowed to be kicked out of the Labour Party with the NEC's approval, then the constitutional reforms which were introduced at this year's conference will not be worth the paper they are written on.

Yours fraternally,  
Ted Healin



"Exitist" Prentice

# PRESS GANG



The Ayatollah Khomeini won his ballot for a new constitution by a landslide and failed to magic opposition into disappearing.

Now the Ayatollah Edwardes has repeated the formula for BL, claiming the support of 80% of the workforce for his programme of mass sackings.

The press had every right to crow. It was a result which they played a major hand in providing—a vindication of the pressure which they helped to apply.

During the crucial few days following the announcement of the ballot it became virtually impossible to distinguish the advertisements placed by Edwardes, from the copy run in his support by the media.

There can have been few less private places to fill in the ballot form than the homes of Leyland workers, besieged from all sides by leaders of industry, trade union officials, television, radio and the press to mark their cross in the box called suicide.

The *Daily Telegraph* acknowledged the importance of this barrage for the ruling class.

"As Sir Michael said: 'it

vindicates our decision to go direct to the employees and obtain their considered decision in the privacy of their own homes, free to make the decision quietly and deliberately'.

"Does anyone seriously imagine that anything like the same result would have come out of a mass meeting, with stewards ready to jot down the names of those daring to defy their dictat. [!]

"As Mr. James Prior weighs up whether or not to include provision for secret ballots in his proposed legislation on unions, the 80% return at Leyland should not be overlooked."

In fact of course it has not been stewards who have been jotting down names, but Edwardes—who has invited those who voted 'no' to leave the company, and no doubt intends to help them go.

### Reservation

The *Guardian* too, celebrates ("A victory is a victory is a victory!") but with a slight reservation.

"Critics of referendums as an instrument of national policy have long argued that it is relatively easy to gain the results you want if you have control of

the question and a fair degree of controls of the means of communication. (Sir Michael had both.) The trick is to make those results stick."

Deeper in the gutter the cries of victory were unmoderated by any such caution.

The *Express* started its news story:

"The power of Leyland's once mighty militants lay shattered on the shop floor last night. The company's chairman, Sir Michael Edwardes, proved in a landslide vote that BL's shop stewards speak only for a tiny minority."

### Poison

And the *Mail*, in an article headed 'Hammering for Leyland stewards' remarked:

"Sir Michael served notice on the shop stewards that he is prepared to go to the workforce over their heads again on major issues."

The victory celebrations, however, failed to make top billing in their final form.

The press had already turned its attention to the next dose of poison that it will try to disguise as medicine—£3,500 million worth of public spending cuts.

# Big money witch-hunt on 'H' Block demo

A major witch-hunt has begun in Oxford against trade unionists and Labour Party members who supported the recent Sinn Fein demonstration through the town.

Several trade union branches supported the march on the basis of supporting the political status for republican prisoners.

These included NUJ branches from Oxford and the Magazine Branches, Blackwells ACTSS and the TGWU 5/293.

Two Labour Party ward banners were on the 700-strong march, one from Oxford, the other from Hemel Hempstead.

Following the march an expensively printed and produced leaflet was handed out by people claiming to be students outside Blackwell's offices and the Cowley works.

The 'students' admitted they were being paid £10 a head to hand out the leaflets, which

were not signed or marked with any publisher's mark. The college which they claimed to belong to has denied knowledge of them.

The leaflets asked workers why their union 'supported the IRA' and went on to claim that their union leaders were supporting murderers.

The leaflets were a co-ordinated attempt, most probably by NAFF-type capitalists, to attack the unions themselves.

### Own leaflet

Blackwell's workers hit back with a leaflet of their own. They pointed out that the issue had been discussed and approved in the branch and that there were differing views on the question amongst union members, and declared:

"Ireland is the country of the Irish people as a whole and they should have the right to determine their future.

"Britain and its army has no right to be there.

"Saying this does not automatically signify agreement with the methods of individual terrorism and civilian bombings used by the IRA.

"These methods serve only to obscure and alienate.

"The union supports no political party with the exception of the Labour Party—a levy which members can, and some do, opt out of."

While the employers pursue the witch-hunt the right wing trade union leaders have jumped on the bandwagon.

On the same day as a letter from the National Front appeared in the *Oxford Mail* asking why they were the only 'true patriots' who had been prepared to confront the march, an article appeared in the *Oxford Journal* quoting Trades Council president, John Power, as claiming that unions had defied a trades council vote not to take part.

In fact no vote had been allowed at the previous Trades

Council meeting, and far from there being any ban on the march, Power had ruled discussion out of order.

At the subsequent Trades Council meeting Power made a statement deploring those who had taken part in the march and, when challenged on his statement to the press refused to allow it to be discussed.

Pat Lally, delegate from the ACTSS Blackwells branch angrily waved the leaflet which had been put into his workplace and demanded an explanation.

Power's response was to attempt (unconstitutionally) to throw him out of the meeting and then to close it when he refused to leave without a vote.

This witch-hunt has an interesting sidelight on the positions of the International Spartacist Tendency.

### Scab position

The issue was who would in practice defend Provisional

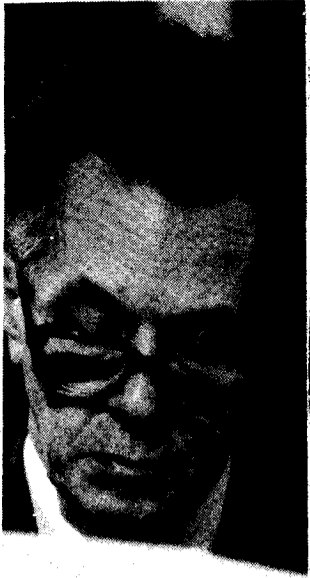
Sinn Fein's right to march and support basic democratic demands for political status and anti-imperialist demands for the withdrawal of troops.

The IST brought a contingent to Oxford on the day of

the march. They sold papers before and afterwards and took photographs, but refused to march. That, despite pretty footwork of 'not green or orange' is a scab position.



The Sinn Fein march through Oxford



Keith Joseph



Canley car workers on Confed protest march



Edwardes

**CONFEDERATION OF SHIPBUILDING AND ENGINEERING UNIONS.**

The Executive Council is convinced there is no feasible alternative to the BL recovery plan. We therefore strongly urge all Trade Union members to vote **YES** in the present ballot.

Published by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions  
General Secretary A. Ferry



Cars Council members Edwardes

# British Leyland: the road to Edwardes' run-do

British Leyland represents a very large slice of the engineering industry in Britain. It accounts for 50% of vehicle production in the UK and currently employs 165,000 workers, with a further 750,000 geared to it in the component industry.

The policies of successive Labour and Tory governments towards BL have differed only by degree. Both have approached BL not from the standpoint of protecting the interests of workers or preserving jobs, but from the requirements of an increasingly crisis-ridden British capitalism.

### Reformist servant

The outcome of such an approach has varied to the extent that the Tories are the party of the capitalist master, while the Labour leaders are simply his reformist servant.

It is more difficult for a Labour government to close

down major sections of industry than it is for the Tories.

Reformists not only cling to the illusion that by shrewd management capitalism can be expanded to provide concessions and reforms for the working class, but also base themselves very much on a close political relationship with the trade union bureaucracy—a relationship which is made more difficult in the face of a wholesale destruction of jobs and hard-won living standards.

### Contraction

But of course what predominates in the actions of the Labour leaders is their commitment to seeking reforms within the capitalist system.

As a result, in the last instance, they, like the Tories, have found themselves set on a course of contraction in British Leyland—a course that must lead to its eventual liquidation.

The reason for this is the particular impact on the British economy of the world wide crisis of capitalism. The growing

recession has produced intensified competition for markets, which in turn has brought an overcapacity in the motor industry on a world scale.

The waves of mergers and bankruptcies that have taken place in recent years—the most recent being the sale of Chrysler UK to Peugeot and the acute financial crisis of Chrysler in the USA—are clear symptoms of the process whereby the anarchy of the capitalist market forces "rationalisation" and restricts the growth of the productive forces.

British capitalism, creaming off profits and reluctant to reinvest, has lagged behind other capitalist economies in technical innovation—ensuring that its products, particularly cars, are increasingly overpriced and outdated on the world market.

The employers are attempting to tackle this by changing the economic and industrial structure in Britain.

Though British wages have plummeted in value compared to those in other industrialised countries, the rate of exploita-



PHOTO: Angela Phillips, IFL

tion of workers in Europe and Japan is much higher.

In a move to rectify this, and to find ways of cashing in on more profitable production overseas, the capitalist class has decided that basic manufacturing industry in Britain—cars, shipbuilding and steel production—should be run down, and capital invested in production elsewhere.

### Profit

The recent Tory decision to lift all exchange controls to allow the unimpeded export of capital is designed to further facilitate this process.

For the employer the prime criterion is not national borders, but the extraction of profit. If this can be more effectively done by owning a share of Italian, Japanese or other "foreign" industries than by owning factories in Britain, then this will be done.

Meanwhile of course the capitalists and their allies in the Labour and trade union movement continue to demand that workers sacrifice jobs, social services and living standards "in the national interest".

### Continuous attack

The rundown of BL began in earnest in 1972, four years after the British Leyland Motor Corporation was formed. Management decided to close two of BLMC's heavy transmission plants—Thorncrofts

in Basingstoke and Maudsley Motors in Birmingham.

But wages and conditions in the corporation have been under continuous attack since BLMC was formed in 1968.

Having made the piece-work system of payment work to their advantage, BLMC workers had achieved wages at least double those earned by Ford and Vauxhall workers, who were tied to a flat rate payment.

BLMC wages were also far in excess of those in the public services or the bulk of the engineering industry.

But the Labour government of Harold Wilson saw the high wages and militancy of BLMC workers as a driving force for the wages movement elsewhere, and gave enthusiastic support to the BLMC board in its attacks on the piece work system.

Thus the ten years or so of BL have been ten years of determination by successive managements to achieve a rigid flat rate uniform wages structure controlled and negotiated centrally by a Joint Negotiating Committee.

The eventual aim has been to move along American lines to pay talks at industry level.

The problem which BL workers had from the outset in resisting these attacks was their leadership. The leadership of the Combine Committee, which had played an important role in the previous period, was firmly in the hands of the Communist Party.

They accepted the general

line of BL policy.

Dick Etheridge, then CP convenor of the vast Longbridge complex, told workers there was nothing to fear from the company's proposed flat-rate Measured Day Work payment system.

### No resistance

He likened it to payment systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—perhaps forgetting that BLMC is a capitalist firm in an anarchic capitalist economy!

This meant that when BL forced in MDW in 1970 there was no resistance from the plants with Communist Party leadership.

Only Jaguars (with a right wing leadership) and the Cowley Assembly plant with a Trotskyist leadership struck in opposition to the scheme.

Both the strikes were beaten by isolation and the determined intervention of the officials.

The introduction of Measured Day Work coincided with the wage freeze policies of Heath's Tory government, and had a dramatic impact on BL wages over the subsequent four years.

But this erosion of real wages was nowhere near enough for management. Indeed in order to minimise shop floor resistance to MDW the company had agreed to a work effort which fell far short of their requirements—particularly in plants which had resisted the scheme.

BL really needed piece-work effort on MDW wages.

### Agreement

The re-election of a Labour government, headed by Wilson, in February 1974 therefore brought behind-the-scenes discussions as how best to wage the necessary attacks on the BL workforce.

It is clear that an agreement was reached with TGWU and AUEW leaders Jones and Scanlon in which they would ensure the acquiescence of the trade union leadership in the restructuring and rationalisation of BL and undertake the crushing of the power of sections of the shop stewards movement which resisted management policy.



Mass meeting at Leyland truck plant in Preston

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

# OUR POLICIES

\*Threatened plants must be occupied to provide a focus for the struggle throughout BL.

\*Open the books of BL, its suppliers and bankers! Open the books of the British car industry! Unmask the profiteers! Warn of the dangers to thousands of workers outside BL.

\*No redundancies! For work sharing on full pay: the reduced work available must be divided between the whole workforce, under the control of trade union

committees, without loss of pay.

\*Defeat Edwardes and his Tory backers! For a massive campaign for a 'no' vote in Edwardes' ballot! Mobilise mass action alongside BL workers in the fight to bring down the Tory asset-strippers!

\*For the nationalisation without compensation of the engineering industry and the banks, under workers' management. For a socialist plan of production for the need of the many, not the profits of the few!

\*Kick out the Labour traitors! Drive out Edwardes' Confed collaborators, and the Labour leaders whose policies have paved the way for the Edwardes plan. Demand that those who claim to oppose the sackings stand up and lead a fight for a socialist alternative throughout the labour movement, or stand exposed.

\*Build a principled, revolutionary leadership among BL workers!



Amber Bill Roche (right) with TGWU national official Grenville Hawley presenting petition to

## Background

### OWN

By Bill Peters

The collaboration was shameless. Soon Scanlon and Jones were to appear side by side on the front page of BL's house journal *Leyland Mirror*, under the headline "KEEP WORKING!" They warned of "the enemy without" (the Tories) and "the enemy within" (the militants).

The Cowley Assembly plant, a high volume, high investment factory with good working conditions, was a prime target for speed-up. In April 1974 management forced stop watch studies on the tracks. A three week strike ensued.

The strike eventually crumbled under the threat of closure of the plant and the company victimised the leader of the strike, deputy convenor Alan Thornett.

A further three week strike by his section restored his shop steward's credentials but not his deputy convenor position.

### Removed

But Jack Jones then intervened through Region 5 of the TGWU.

The plant leadership was removed from office and fresh convenors' elections were held under conditions of a huge national press and TV witch-hunt and for the first time, conducted through a secret ballot of the entire shop floor—a policy now central to Tory anti-union strategy. A right wing leadership was elected.

Although management then had some success in forcing some speed up at Cowley, the increased effort remained insufficient to meet the requirements of BL or the British capitalist class.

In 1975 a commission of inquiry into BLMC was set up under Lord Ryder. It produced a report which resulted in the National Enterprise Board acquiring a 95% stake in the company.

The Labour leaders proudly proclaimed this as a "rescue" operation in which BL workers could be grateful for the use of taxpayers' money.

TUC leaders also continually referred to the Labour government's record in "saving" BL. But all this was far from the truth.

Ryder's proposed massive

investment programme—designed to create conditions for more speed-up—could not be funded privately. And it was arranged in such a way as to hang a continuing threat over the heads of BL workers.

The cash would only be given in six-monthly tranches, and would be withheld if the required productivity targets were not met and if redundancies were not accepted.

And the money would be made available at commercial rates of interest—thus ensuring a return to the bankers from this "taxpayers' money".

### "Participation"

The backbone of the plan was so-called "worker participation". This was designed to break down the once-strong shop stewards' movement in BL.

Stewards and convenors were to be sucked into joint committees which considered management problems and on which management had the final say.

Participation was successful in its main objectives. It wreaked havoc in the shop stewards' movement, not simply because of the class collaborationist content of the scheme, but because it was enthusiastically supported by Labour 'lefts' such as Wedgewood Benn and by the Communist Party.

These people described participation as a "step towards workers control". In reality it was a shrewd means of controlling the workers.

But still the galloping pace of the crisis in British industry outstripped even the successes scored by BL management in the two years of Ryder.

By 1977 BL's market share had shrivelled from 40% to 25%. It was selling fewer cars than in 1968!

### Complete run-down

What was increasingly required was not half measures but a wholesale cutback in BL, and its eventual complete run-down.

A change of leadership was essential for the capitalist class.

The abrupt resignation of Sir Richard Dobson as chairman of the British Leyland board, following the public disclosure of racist remarks made by

him at a private dinner party, created the conditions for this change.

Michael Edwardes, a reactionary South African with a savage reputation for sitting out prolonged strikes at his previous firm, Chloride, was appointed as BL chairman and managing director.

From the start Edwardes was far more than another in a long line of BL chairmen. Far from seeking to expand the Corporation, he was an asset-stripper.

He had the full backing of the Labour government to run down BL, carve it up and hive it off.

And he was at once conscious of the greatest asset he could have in this task—the BL convenors.

Weakened by years of class collaborationist participation, and led by Communist Party members deeply committed to making BL "viable", the convenors were at once putty in Edwardes' hands.

As an added bonus, they also backed the abolition of plant level bargaining and its replacement by corporate-level negotiations.

### Appalling

Their record over the preceding years had been appalling by any standards. Ryder had drawn them into an 'ad hoc' committee of convenors, and had worked through the Cars Council, the highest body in the participation set-up.

In the summer of 1977 they set up the Leyland Cars Joint Negotiating Committee to continue the same collaborationist traditions.

The convenors rapidly earned the reputation of being the world's worst negotiators. Time and again they were outmanoeuvred by management into accepting everything the company wanted—from a new "red book" containing stringent penalty clauses, to 'bonus schemes' designed to throw thousands out of work.

Edwardes could hardly wait to cash in on the legacy. Within weeks of his appointment he had called a joint conference of convenors and plant managers, to take a vote on his first 'Edwardes plan' in January 1978.

To this joint assembly—in which plant directors mingled with plant convenors—Edwardes declared that his plan was the only hope of survival for BL.

It amounted to restructuring the corporation into a number of separate limited companies, and cutting productive capacity. This would make individual sections easier to hive off.

Edwardes talked of 20,000 redundancies, but avoided saying how this was to be achieved—though by then he had the 'participation' report fingering the Triumph TR7 plant at Speke as a 'low productivity' factory ripe for closure, and had almost certainly planned the shutdown of the AEC truck plant in Southall.

As he finished outlining his plan the effects of years of participation became clear. Convenors and plant directors rose with one accord and gave his job-slashing scheme a prolonged standing ovation.

### Howled down

The manager chairing the meeting then went to put Edwardes' plan to a vote.

When Bob Fryer, the newly re-elected convenor of the Cowley Assembly Plant objected to a joint vote being taken—particularly when it involved thousands of redundancies—he was howled down on all sides and ridiculed as a 'lunatic' by Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson and Canley convenor Eddie McGarry.

Fryer's election has brought an important new element into the struggle for leadership in BL.

He had been re-elected a month earlier when the previous left-wing leadership, removed in 1974, was returned to office (including Alan Thornett who was re-elected deputy convenor).

Fryer was quickly elected onto the LCJNC and became an important force.

No longer could the committee be sworn to secrecy as in the past and now management's voice was challenged for the first time.

The LCJNC successfully moved for the winding up of "participation".

The closure of the Speke plant was a key test for Edwardes in implementing his plan.

He knew that if he could get away with a closure in Liverpool, a militant and high unemployment area, he would stand a good chance elsewhere.

Prominent among those who made that closure possible were McGarry and Robinson who had so vocally attacked Fryer in January.



Eddie McGarry

Robinson conducted Speke mass meetings at which any talk of occupation was carefully avoided and no action was taken: and McGarry knifed the struggle further by agreeing to accept that the work from the doomed Speke plant should be transferred to Canley.

Six weeks ago, Edwardes announced his latest package of closures and redundancies—including the closure of Canley. He did so with the experience of Speke firmly under his belt.

But his talk of a further 25,000 lost jobs received a different initial response from BL convenors, and particularly from the CP.

The Combine Committee in emergency session voted to oppose the plan, announcing that in this stand they had the full support of the TGWU and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

But the Confed was soon to change its tune. Even while leaflets convening a protest demonstration were being distributed and a Confed "emergency committee" was meeting, Confed leaders were in close talks with Edwardes.

### "Amber light"

Two days before the demonstration, Edwardes, flanked by Confed General Secretary Alex Ferry and President Ken Baker, appeared on television to announce that he now had the "amber light" to proceed with the closures.

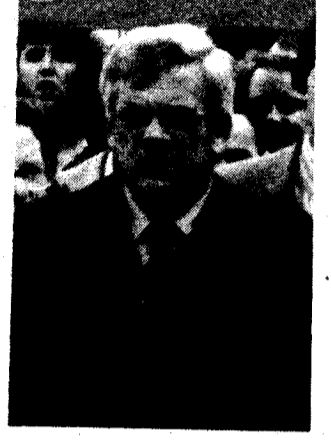
But the union bureaucracy held back on a formal statement. On the demonstration Confed speakers declared that anyone who thought the Confed has accepted the plan was "misinterpreting the situation".

Edwardes however put out a statement declaring himself puzzled as to why the march had been called, since he had agreement with the Confed!

Four days later at the convenors' conference the confusion was ended. While the TGWU secretary of the "emergency committee" stated that the committee still opposed the plan, Alex Ferry urged convenors to accept it, and declared that he was not prepared to fight the plan "over the dead bodies of our members".

When Ferry put the proposal to the vote he was overwhelmingly defeated. But, undeterred, the Confed has proceeded to give "strong support" to the plan to sack thousands of their members.

When Edwardes ordered a company-run ballot to be organised and a massive press campaign swung into action behind Edwardes, the Confed Executive used thousands of pounds of



Ken Baker

trade union money to place advertisements in the *Mirror* and the *Sun* urging a 'yes' vote.

The spectacle of major trade unions, not turning a blind eye as they are in many cases to the cuts in the public services, not simply acquiescing as they are in shipbuilding—but actively fighting for mass redundancies and plant closures, and using the full resources of the unions to do so, must be unprecedented.

Nothing could spell out the bankruptcy of reformist politics more clearly. Nothing could demonstrate in sharper relief the impossibility of opposing management attacks once you accept the capitalist argument that the company must at all costs be made 'viable'.

It is doubtful if BL could ever be viable in capitalist terms.

For every BL worker there are four workers in the private component industry.

The component suppliers are quite capable of ensuring that BL never makes a profit—at least not a profit that will ever show up in the balance sheet of BL.

The answer lies not in the scramble for capitalist 'viability' over the bodies of thousands of redundant workers, nor in lining up with the weakest sections of British capitalism, the Tribune group and the Communist Party in clamouring for import controls to keep out "foreign" competitors.

### Occupations

Existing jobs must be defended through independent action by the working class—factory occupations demanding a policy of work-sharing on full pay be implemented under the control of trade union committees.

The only long term defence of jobs in BL and in the car industry in general lies in the struggle for the nationalisation of the entire car and component industry and the banks, without compensation to the present exploiters and under workers' management. Car manufacture must be integrated into a planned, socialist economy.

Only in this way can the potential benefits of expanding and improving the productive forces be achieved by the working class.

Such a perspective is not simply a pipe dream. The working class has the power to achieve it, provided a leadership is built that is prepared to mobilise massive action in defence of jobs, working conditions and living standards.

Such action must begin now with the decision to occupy threatened plants as a centre-piece of the mass struggles that are necessary to bring down the job-slashing Tory government and spearhead the fight for a government responsive not to the needs of capital but to the interests of the working class.

# A MASTER OF THE SQUALID COMPROMISE

Woodcock

George Woodcock, architect of TUC collaboration with Labour wage control, died in Epsom on 30 October at the age of 75.

Woodcock, who was never elected except by other bureaucrats to any significant trade union position in his life, emerged out of the inner recesses of the TUC's bureaucratic machine to be General Secretary from 1960 to 1969.

During this period he played a leading role in the development of TUC collaboration with the state and employers in the National Economic Development Council, and with the various 'incomes policies' and freezes of the Labour government after 1964.

He was a devout Roman Catholic, a Privy Councillor and a Commander of the British Empire. He is said to have rejected a peerage.

## Ruskin College

Woodcock was born into a poor family in Bamber Bridge, near Preston, in 1904, and worked from 1918 as half-timer in a cotton mill, when he held local positions in the Weavers Association.

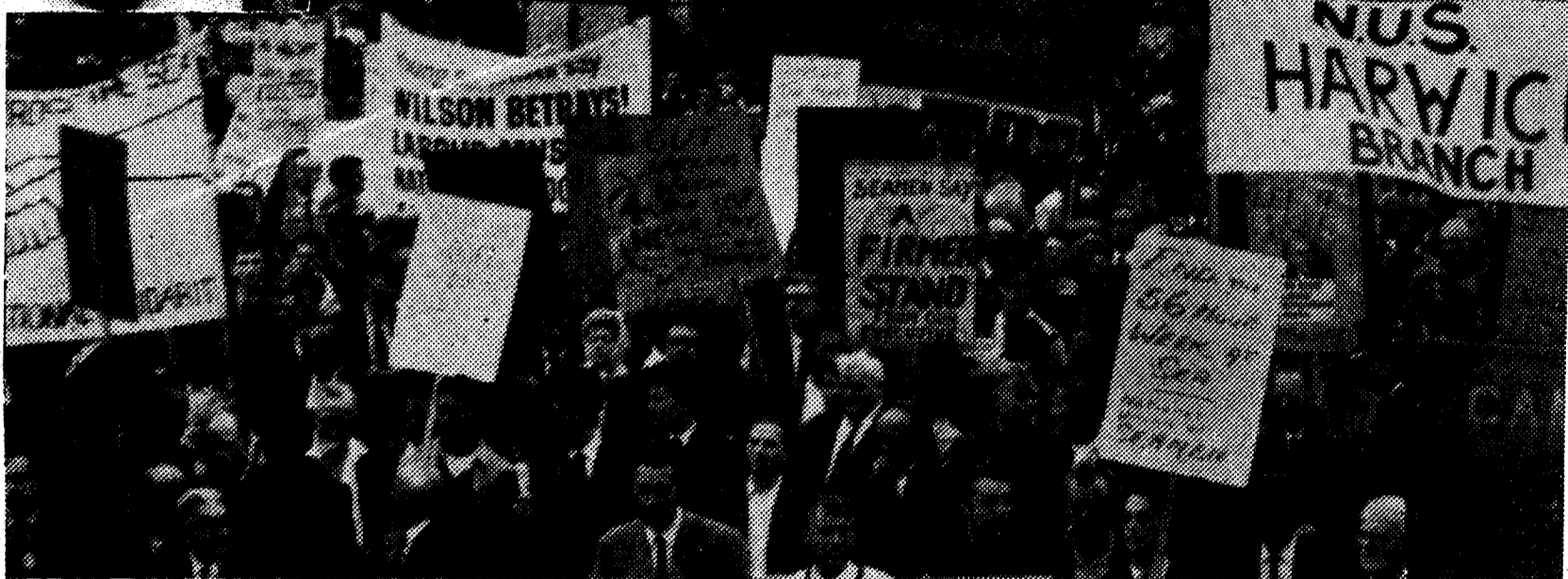
He went to Ruskin College when he was 24, and after that he never looked back.

Having performed with success in Ruskin, Woodcock was transferred to Oxford University, where he did even better.

In 1936 he was made head of the Economics Department at the TUC, where his main job was to prepare briefs for General Secretary Citrine in order to make it easier to work closely with the Tory and Coalition governments of the period.

As a reward for this, Woodcock became in 1946 Assistant General Secretary to the fanatical anti-communist witch-hunter Vincent Tewson, whom it is said he loathed.

Just what Woodcock did in this position, it is difficult to



discover. Unlike his colleague, Vic Feather, he showed little interest in keeping in contact with ordinary trade unionists by attending trades council or other such meetings.

Woodcock proved his worth however, by chairing a TUC committee that collaborated with the capitalist courts in driving out the Stalinist leaders of the Electrical Trades Union in 1959, and ensuring that the extreme right would obtain the stranglehold that they have retained to this day.

## Press image

This done, Woodcock succeeded Tewson as TUC General Secretary in 1960.

In the capitalist press, he has been portrayed as someone who took the trade unions 'out of Trafalgar Square' (his own phrase), and into 'the corridors of power'.

But this view is much too simplistic, since the same could be said of the efforts of every major bureaucrat since the TUC was set up in 1868.

It is important to make the point that Woodcock did not act in the way that trade union bureaucrats have done in the

1970s, by direct connivance with governmental wage-freezing policies.

Nor did he walk, cap in hand, like his predecessors from George Howell to Walter Citrine, into the lobbies of Parliament or the offices of government ministries. Woodcock's special role was to make the transition from one form of collaboration to the other.

He operated in the period when the great post-war boom was collapsing, and he acted in a way to effect the 'shoddy compromise' he so often talked about between the governments he discussed with and the trade union members he was supposed to represent.

When the Tories were still in government up to 1964, Woodcock devoted a great deal of effort to 're-organising' the trade union movement—by which he meant getting greater power for the TUC itself vis-à-vis individual unions.

## Lead from the top

The purpose of this was to allow greater direction from the top over the policies of individual unions.

However, although Woodcock presented a report to this effect to the 1962 TUC, he found that the vested interests of individual bureaucrats prevented him from achieving more than a move towards more amalgamations.

Generally speaking, Woodcock showed little interest in the decisions of Congresses, still less of union conferences or of ordinary members.

Together with Hugh Clegg, he seems to have been the main architect of the Donovan Royal Commission Report on Trade Union and Employers Organisations of 1965-8, which drew attention to the power of shop stewards, but did not advocate major state intervention in the unions.

Woodcock was more interested in collaboration and negotiation with government and employers on a higher level than this.

Thus during the Tory wage freeze in 1962, he got agreement to set up the so-called National Economic Development Council, with representatives of unions, employers and



Woodcock addressing NALGO conference

government supposedly overall economic strategy.

## 'Planning'

As the capitalist economic crisis began to grow, this 'planning' came more and more to take the form of how best to confront the working class.

The 1964 Labour government's so-called 'National Plan' and the 'Declaration of Intent' at the end of 1964 took place against the context of growing economic crisis, with a massive balance of payments deficit and a growing determination of employers and government to keep down wages.

During this period the TUC leadership increasingly cooperated with these policies.

Thus Woodcock told the 1965 Congress 'I am a believer in a prices and incomes policy, make no mistake about that'. He persuaded the Congress to accept the 'early warning system', which was the Labour government's first step in this direction.

In the following year, Woodcock acted as a messenger boy, directly of Prime Minister Wilson, and less directly of the IMF and international bankers,

in efforts to persuade the seamen not to go on strike, then to accept the inquiry Wilson tried to set up, and finally to go back without their aims being realised.

This he did, not by discussing with any ordinary seamen, but by being closeted with the Executive, even rushing back for the purpose, bronzed from holidays abroad.

Much has been said of Woodcock's 'remoteness', and lack of interest in daily trade union life.

This was not just a trait of his personality, but of the position he held, dealing with and responsible solely to other bureaucrats, Tory ministers, etc.

By the end of his period as General Secretary he had grown so remote that he is said to have told Wilson that the union leaders would accept the White Paper *In Place of Strife*.

However, these leaders were compelled by pressure from their members to reject these anti-union proposals, even when they came from a Labour government.

## Irrelevant

Woodcock went off to become Chairman of the Commission on Industrial Relations, a sort of early version of ACAS,

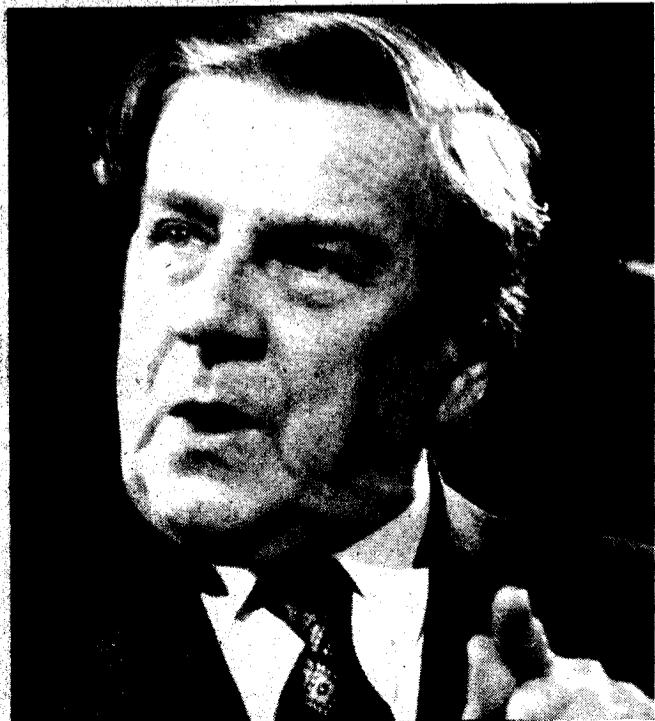
which, in the circumstances of growing struggle and confrontation, was largely irrelevant.

He left it when the Tories tried to bring it into their anti-union machinery.

If it can be said that the White Paper *In Place of Strife*, introduced by the Labour government in 1969 prepared the way for the Tory confrontations with the unions after 1971, so also it can be shown that the 'squalid compromises' of the TUC leaders—with all the steps that led up to this ill-fated document—laid the groundwork in the first place.

The hard fact is that 'economic planning' under capitalism, however many so-called 'workers' representatives' are involved, can only be planning to weaken the power and conditions of the working class.

Woodcock did not collaborate as directly in the formulation of such policies in the '60s as Jack Jones and others were to do in the '70s, but his position in the 'corridors of power' in his day served to reduce the independence of the unions and the standard of living of their members as surely as all the subsequent methods of reformist collaboration beloved by today's bureaucrats of his stamp.



Feather





PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

Low pay strikes—army has rehearsed strike-breaking role



PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

Picketing firemen

# RESEARCHING INTO STATE'S STRIKEBREAKING PLANS

The small bimonthly journal *State Research* regularly contains material which *Socialist Press* readers will find of great interest.

As an independent group, *State Research* systematically gathers and publishes information on developments in the policy of the state, especially in the areas of law, policing and the military.

It seeks to examine links between these areas and the operations of the ruling class.

The paper itself is well researched, presenting details of the regulations and laws under which military and police intervention into strikes take place, the organisational arrangements made by the state and an outline history of recent uses of the state machinery against strikes.

There are four major weaknesses of the report.

It fails to raise appropriate demands to mobilise action against the use of the state machinery against strikers.

It fails to take account of the limits of constitutional and democratic objections to the use of state power by the ruling class.

It fails also to give any reason for the growth in the use

of state powers against strikers by governments of both Labour and Conservative parties.

And, fourthly, it fails to account adequately for the limited response by the labour movement to the use of state powers in strikes.

*Newswire*, the daily paper of the erstwhile Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party, reprinted the *State Research* document in its entirety and without political comment.

## Limitations

Certainly it is valuable to reprint and promote material of this kind, but it cannot be proper for a party claiming to offer revolutionary leadership to limit itself to reprinting material of such importance without drawing attention to its political limitations.

Despite these serious reservations the publication of the *State Research* document is to be welcomed as a valuable summary of current knowledge in this increasingly important area.

One of the recurrent themes of *State Research* is the increasing pace of preparation of the state machinery of repression.

One indication of this acceleration is in the pattern of use

of emergency powers.

Emergency powers in relation to industrial disputes have been used more frequently since 1970 than in their entire previous history since the 1920 Act which first created them.

## Supplies

The original 1920 Emergency Powers Act, which itself enshrined previously adopted wartime regulations, has been used on eleven occasions.

It empowers the government to use the military in industrial disputes if 'the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel or light, or the means of locomotion' are at risk.

Only on seven out of the eleven occasions have troops actually been used.

The 1920 Act requires the approval of Parliament.

The 1964 Emergency Powers Act gives power to the Defence Council (a body in which ministers are outnumbered by the military and civil service) to bring out the troops, with no reference to Parliament, and apparently (as in the case of the West Drayton CPSA strike, when RAF tankers were driven through the picket lines) not even a public announcement of having invoked the Act.

The 1964 Act was also used against the Tower Hamlets dustmen in 1970, the Glasgow firemen in 1973 and the Glasgow dustmen in 1975.

It was also the decisive factor in breaking the 1977/8 firemen's national strike.

There is no doubt that the use of troops against the firemen represented a major development in the crisis.

21,000 troops were used, covering the whole of the country. *State Research* argues that the use of troops under the 1964 Act was illegal, because Army Regulations under the Act only allow 'limited' and 'local' operations to be undertaken.

## Parliament

When the 1964 Act was passed, it was made clear in debate that national operations would continue to require Parliamentary approval under the old 1920 Act procedures. The gap in Army Regulations seems to confirm this.

However, a full scale parliamentary debate would have piled enormous pressure on the Labour 'left', who were in any case forced into a token act of revolt, before throwing their efforts behind the massive sell-out operation.

Certainly the Defence Council wasted no time in amending Army Regulations to legitimise future operations under the 1964 Act.

It is probably at this point that the WSL differs most seriously in its method from that of *State Research* (and with the WRP, to the extent that the WRP can any longer be said to have any method beyond that of the universal lickspittle to every reactionary dictator in the Middle East).

## Leadership crisis

We saw, and still see, the firemen's strike, and the deep crisis associated with it, not as a problem of technical preparation but as a problem of leadership in the working class.

We placed demands on the Labour 'left' to kick out the Callaghan leadership which had sent in the troops, and on the TUC leadership to bring forward other wage claims, particularly for NUM and NUPE members, so that a campaign which would be too big for the state to control could begin.

We fought to broaden the base of the strike through the formation of local councils of action drawing delegations from working class trade union and political organisations.

It is primarily a consequence of the failures and treachery of the workers' leadership that the firemen's strike was defeated and the state proceeded to deepen its plans and preparations for attacks on the workers.

Since December 1978 troops have been trained in a series of skills which can only be used to break strikes—tanker driving, water engineering, ambulance operation etc.

The fruits of this preparation were shown in the military strike breaking in the ambulance strikes and industrial civil service strikes of this year, and the standby of troops during the tanker strike.

The military preparation has gone hand in hand with the development of an administrative machinery at national, regional and local levels.

While a good deal of work remains to be done in this area, it is emerging that at local levels, councils' chief officers participate in emergency powers activity over the heads of elected councillors.

## No checks

The *State Research* paper also deals with the use of police against strikes, which is less well documented because there are apparently no constitutional checks at all.

Physical attacks against pickets, and systematic harassment by police are on the increase, as everyone who has been on strike in the last three years will confirm.

Again, the Workers Socialist League would focus attention not on the technical aspects of police operations (although we do not deny the importance of studying these) but on the role of trade union leaderships in reaching agreements with the police that limit the size of pickets and lead to desperation or demoralisation by the strikers.

The strikes at Grunwicks and Garners set the pattern for these methods and allowed the police to develop them.

A mass campaign will be needed to force the TUC and the Labour Party into action to defend workers' rights.

This will only be achieved over the dead bodies of the present leaderships.

At some stage it will be necessary for the *State Research* to explain where all their studies of the state have led, and what political conclusions they draw.

Some of these weaknesses are apparent in their most recent background paper on strikes, the police and the military.

## Problems

Although we would certainly recommend the journal to all *Socialist Press* readers it needs to be pointed out that independent groups outside a revolutionary party present certain problems.

A kind of authority can build up in a specialised journal on the basis of the quality of its research.

Inevitably there will arise occasions when the group needs to make explicit political statements and will utilise as political authority an authority which is academic or technical.

Sometimes this procedure is consciously developed—the most important case in point being the Stalinist-controlled *Labour Research*, which undeniably provides a valuable service to large numbers of trade union branches.

From time to time however it is obliged to put forward the CP party line, which it does without acknowledgement of any boundary between investigative journalism and propaganda.

(Regular readers of *Labour Research* were puzzled in December 1978 to read a straight piece of extreme right wing propaganda under the authorship of Air Vice Marshall Bennett, the patron of the British League of Rights.

This was published as part of an out of court settlement in a libel action against *Labour Research*. The readers were never given any explanation!)

No such problems have arisen in the case of *State Research* so far.

However E.P. Thompson has made use of *State Research* as a platform for his own anti-Leninist view of the state and democratic struggles.

The latest issue of *State Research* should be in the possession of every revolutionary worker and the information in it should be used in as many union meetings and Labour Party branches as possible in the coming months.

By  
Ernie Stubbins

NOW  
OUT

THE  
BATTLE  
FOR  
TROTSKYISM

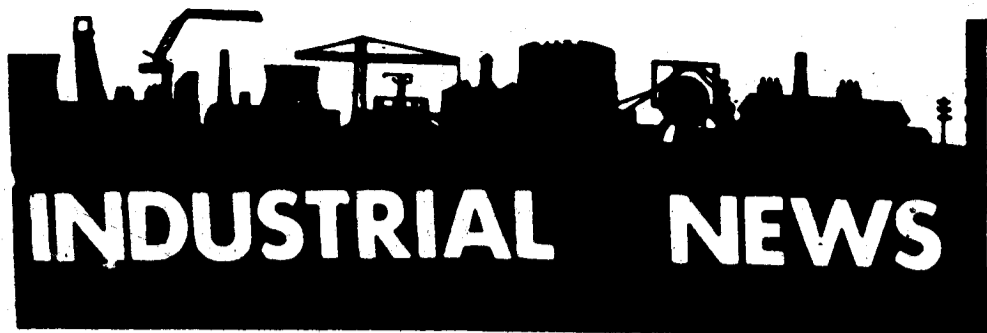
This is a second edition of the documents of the opposition inside the WRP which was expelled and formed the Workers Socialist League in December 1974.

Available, price £2.70 including postage, from WSL, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Callaghan during firemen's strike



# INDUSTRIAL NEWS



ISTC banner on Corby demonstration

## ISTC CALLS ACTION TO HALT CORBY CLOSURE

The call by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation for a national overtime ban, a one-day strike and a series of selective stoppages represents the first substantial programme of official action to resist closures in steel or any other industry.

The union move is designed to halt the British Steel Corporation's plan to close down steel-making facilities at Corby in Northamptonshire, at a cost of 5,000 jobs.

It comes from a right wing collaborationist leadership that

has up until now made a virtue of its cringing subservience to management efforts to make the Corporation "viable".

### "Deficit"

But as steelworkers throughout the country have begun to recognise the cost to them of helping BSC wipe out its £350 million per year alleged "deficit" through closures, redundancies and speed-up, militancy has clearly grown—to the extent that ISTC leader Bill Sirs feels compelled to flex the considerable muscles of the union.

Things have clearly been made more embarrassing for ISTC and other union leaders by the open and arrogant contempt shown by BSC management for their annual wage claim—when bureaucrats were sent packing and told to "think again".

Now, according to Bill Sirs, whether or not the TUC Steel Committee endorses the ISTC's proposed action, the union is prepared to press ahead alone.

As the biggest union in the industry, the ISTC has the power to paralyse steel production, and the numbers to impose effective pickets on docks to prevent the import of scab steel

stocks.

An all-out strike would rapidly force the Tories to their knees.

This is almost certainly why Sirs has opted instead for the partial action of an overtime ban and selective strikes—to provide maximum leeway for some form of squalid compromise to be devised before the engineering industry is completely disrupted.

However Sirs still predicts that the overtime ban itself would eventually bring production to a halt.

It is clear that this call—inadequate though it is—must be

implemented by workers who throughout the industry face a continuing series of Tory attacks on jobs, living standards and working conditions.

Meanwhile supporting action from dockers and transport workers must be sought in the preparation for an all-out strike.

No confidence should be placed in Sirs' ability to lead such a struggle to victory. A string of closed and deserted steel plants across the country have shown his inability to challenge the logic of making BSC "viable".

the threatened Shotton plant) must go hand in hand with the fight for a principled revolutionary leadership in the steel unions capable of mobilising the strength of the members in defence of their independent interests.



Bill Sirs

But his bluff must be called by steel workers and other steel unions forced to support.

The struggle for action in defence of jobs at Corby (and



Corby workers demonstrating last week

## 'BIG HECTOR'S' VISION OF MASS SACKINGS

A gauge of the type of union leader steel workers must confront if they are to defend jobs and conditions has been offered by a recent appeal from "Big Hector" Smith, leader of the Blast-furnacemen's Union published by BSC management's paper "Steel News".

"Big Hector" was urging British Leyland workers to vote 25,000 of their brothers and sisters out of a job—in order to save jobs in the steel industry!

"My plea to Leyland men is this. Back the [Edwardes] plan, get Leyland competitive again, because if you don't you'll be committing suicide, and the death of Leyland will be a devastating body blow to major suppliers like British Steel".

Spelling out his own "reluctant" acceptance of BSC's wholesale butchery of steel jobs, "Big Hector" goes on.

"It is not easy to accept rationalisation and reduced manning, in fact it's bloody painful as we in the steel industry know only too well. We've shed tens of thousands of jobs in the last few years.

"And it's especially hard for trade unionists and trade union officials to accept these changes. Their role has traditionally been to defend jobs, but unions are gradually seeing the truth that there is no point in fighting for every job if the end result is no work for anyone."

Soaring unemployment has in no way deterred "Big Hector" from his mission in life—restoring the "viability" of BSC at the expense of his members, and acting as a secondary arm of management.

"In BSC we are still demanning. My union now says to BSC 'you show us where we are over-manned on the blast furnaces or coke ovens, and we'll negotiate phasing out these jobs'".

Smith makes no bones about his nationalist alliance with British capitalism against the workers of the world:

"At the end of the day we should have a leaner, tougher organisation of dedicated steelmen who, with some of the best kit in the world—like the 10,000 tonnes a day blast furnace at Redcar—will knock the hell out of our competitors."

If Smith has his way, then, today's mass sackings at BSC will be only a prelude to tomorrow's mass sackings in the USA, Japan and West Germany!

### "Have vision!"

And for the 25,000 BL workers facing the dole queue he has words of encouragement:

"So it must be with Leyland. I say to Leyland men: we know how you feel, we know the problems, but have vision! Have the courage to do what you know in your hearts has to be

done. Don't be misled by the hypocrites who know that changes are necessary, but haven't got the guts to come out and say so. Twenty five thousand men may have to go, but hundreds of thousands of jobs will be made more secure."

For "Big Hector" it is a case of "workers of the world unite with the employers"—in a cut-throat trade war in which unemployment and recession are spurred on with the aid of union leaders.

"Let us have solidarity—solidarity of purpose, steelmen and car men. To get this bloody lovely country of ours moving again."

"Car men and steel men" have a common interest alright—in throwing abject collaborators like Smith out of their entrenched leadership positions in the labour movement.

That task needs more than "solidarity": it needs a political alternative.

## JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

Returned to office after five years of Labour betrayals, the Tory government has immediately begun wielding a sharpened axe on jobs, conditions and social services. Trade Union rights face imminent legal attack. Prices are already beginning to rocket upwards.

Plum sectors of state industry will be handed to the Tories' profiteering big business backers; and the pay rises to police and armed forces mark only the prelude to increased state violence against pickets and anti-fascists, and an intensified army crack-down in the occupied North of Ireland.

The Callaghan-Healey leadership has made it clear that it will oppose any perspective other than settling down and meekly accepting five years of Tory devastation.

And, though they have once more dusted off their near-forgotten "socialist" speeches, Labour's "left-wing" MPs have continued to duck away from any fight to remove Callaghan.

TUC leaders, too, have set out to establish a basis for collaboration with Thatcher and the Tory cabinet, paralleling their anti-working class alliance with Wilson and then Callaghan. But the working class has experienced and overcome such betrayals before—to topple Heath's union-bashing government in 1974, and smash through Callaghan's reactionary Phase 4 of wage controls in a series of monumental pay battles last winter.

These experiences are not dead. They point to the way that jobs, social services and hard-won union rights can be defended against renewed Tory attacks.

But a principled, revolutionary leadership is needed if the Labour traitors, the TUC collaborators and their hangers-on in the Communist Party are to be exposed and pushed aside, and the mass struggles mobilised that can defeat and remove the Tory government.

Such a leadership must fight day in and day out for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's conditions and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers to grasp the necessity for socialist revolution.

And in taking up democratic demands—such as an end to racial and sexual discrimination, it must show the crucial role that must be played by the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class capable of leading the struggle for the emancipation of mankind.

And it must fight on an *international* basis—mobilising solidarity for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles—whether in Ireland, in Southern Africa or elsewhere throughout the world, and drawing strength, and political lessons from revolutionary upheavals such as that which ousted the hated Shah in Iran.

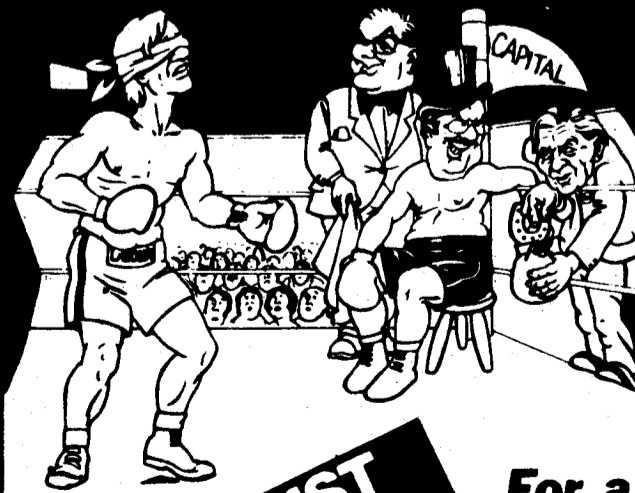
This means fighting for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This method of approach, rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, or concessions to any wing of the labour bureaucracy, is the method fought for by the Workers Socialist League.

The next period will see major class struggles in Britain. A principled, Marxist leadership is essential. Our movement though strong in programme remains small in numbers.

JOIN US and take forward the struggle for socialism!

**DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!**



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# Talbot leads in new Scottish sackings

Thousands more jobs are threatened in Scotland as the Tory-fuelled recession grinds on.

BSR is to close one of its three factories in East Kilbride—at a cost of 1,000 jobs.

A "drop in demand" is blamed for the closure, which follows extensive short-time working among BSR's largely female workforce.

Similar arguments are also being used to explain the move by Chrysler (Talbot) UK to axe night shift production at their Linwood plant.

But while the employers

talk of a market smaller than they planned to meet, they have also made it clear that they intend to introduce speed-up in Linwood designed to ensure that the smaller workforce produces nearly as many cars.

## 25% speed-up

Chrysler management are openly talking of enforcing a 25% increase in productivity.

Massey Ferguson, too, are planning cutbacks in their combine harvester plant at Kilmarnock, where 1,000 more sackings are expected.

For Scottish workers—28,000 of whom have been

notified of redundancy since April—the alleged "problems" of these giant capitalist firms are only of incidental interest.

The central issue is to defend workers' jobs and living standards. This means exposing the lies and behind the scenes profiteering of the manufacturers and their bankers through the fight to open their books to elected trade union committees.

And it means preparing for full-scale occupation of threatened plants as a focal point for mass action to bring down this job-slashing Tory government, and as the basis of the fight for work-sharing without loss of pay to defend all jobs.



# LEYLAND

From back page

letter to all employees after the result saying "Those who voted against the plan must now accept the clear and decisive view of the majority".

That Edwardes, as an employer, should use the ballot result to launch an all-out attack on the trade union movement within BL can be understood.

But he will continue to be assisted in this task by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, whose leaders "strongly recommended" a yes vote.

Confed chairman Ken Baker greeted the ballot result—which went in favour of the closure of 13 plants, and the destruction of 25,000 jobs in BL and 150,000 more outside BL—as "a victory for common sense".

## Pledge to help

And the Confed has pledged to help Edwardes implement his plan from now on—with bureaucratic action to prevent workers fighting closures.

Complete and enthusiastic support for sackings on this scale must be something of a record even for the cringing bureaucrats who head the Confederation.

Meanwhile the TGWU, which officially opposed the Edwardes Plan only managed to produce their leaflet calling for a 'no' vote after the vote had taken place.

trade union claim on the annual pay review—and rearranged it for October 31, the day of the ballot result.

When the reply to the claim was made, it was obvious why he had planned it this way.

He may well have lost the ballot had he revealed his pay offer before the vote was taken.

And he desperately needed the authority of a 'yes' vote if he was going to get away with the attack he was planning.

To a claim of £24 a week across the board and a cost of living clause, he replied with 5% for grades two, three, four and five and 10% for grade one.

In return for this pathetic 5% offer, Edwardes is demanding:

\*The abolition of the section of the lay off agreement—which provides for 80% of earnings for seven days when workers are laid off through disputes within BL;

\*No-strike penalty clauses; \*Complete flexibility and the ending of seniority agreements;

\*Acceptance of a so-called 'bonus scheme', which was rejected in a secret ballot two years ago.

## No payout

This 'bonus scheme' would rarely pay out any money, but would require a corporation wide industrial engineering agreement and the reallocation of work on the tracks to ensure "parity of effort".

The new industrial engineering agreement could abolish any form of mutuality and give unlimited access to the tracks for the Industrial Engineers.

Edwardes' argument is that since the majority voted to accept that sackings were necessary to "save the company", the majority will accept this pay deal under the same illusion.

But Edwardes is skating on thin ice. There is little doubt that the offer will receive a hostile reception when it reaches the shop floor.

It is vitally important that a lead should be given from the LCJNC.

They have not yet rejected the offer—but have taken a further three days to consider the implications of it.

No time must be lost.

The offer must be rejected and a recommendation for strike action put to mass meetings throughout BL.

# 39 hr week in shops

130,000 low paid shop workers are among the first to benefit from the spin-off from the national engineering pay claim, in which the Engineering Employers Federation conceded a 39 hour week in 1981.

But the fact that without even a token action negotiators for supermarket staff were able to win the cut in hours to be conceded next November—a year earlier than the engineers—gives a gauge of the betrayal by leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, whose two-days-per-week strikes had eventually brought the employers to their knees.

Supermarket staff, too, have their problems of leadership, of course. The initial claim was only a £55 minimum adult rate and a 35 hour week.

Employers, fattened by years of massive exploitation and growing profits, almost at once conceded the £55 minimum in two stages and the 39-hour week.

But rather than capitalise on this weakness to press the full claim, leaders of USDAW, the shop workers' union, allowed the whole deal to be steam-rollered through in two days flat—and agreed to an 18-month settlement that will leave shopworkers stranded in a rising tide of inflation.

## Adverts

Confed leaders used thousands of pounds of trade union money to place advertisements in the national daily papers to press for a 'yes' vote.

# Vauxhall defeat

3,000 TGWU members from Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant voted last week to end their 8-week strike for a 25% pay claim, and accept the company's 17% offer.

This effective admission of defeat comes at the end of a tenacious struggle in which employers have used court injunctions and police violence to smash picket lines on docks and Vauxhall showrooms.

This dress rehearsal for the imposition of Tory anti-union legislation has been carried out with the tacit endorsement of TGWU officials who left the strike isolated, and of right wing convenors at the Luton and Dunstable plants who mounted no fight against Vauxhalls 17% with strings offer.

Workers will pay a heavy price for these betrayals.

On return to work, Ellesmere Port workers, like their brothers and sisters at Talbot plants in Coventry, are certain to face a new savage offensive on manning levels and working conditions.

# Bosses welch on pay deal

Eight weeks ago, after an all-out strike, shop floor workers at Johnson and Johnson's Gargrave plant in North Yorkshire won an 18.9% rise.

The workers, GMWU members, struck for a £50 basic wage for 40 hours and settled for £47 plus a £2 bonus.

The strike was the first prolonged dispute in the plant's history, with the membership being forced to challenge a bankrupt GMWU local leadership.

The result was that one official was shouted out at a plant meeting when he attempted to obtain an early sell-out.

Prior to this action, in June, APEX members at the factory had settled, without a fight, for 11.4% plus a management promise, written into the agreement, that if another group of company workers settled

for a substantially higher sum APEX could reopen negotiations.

The action of the shop floor has paved the way for an improvement on the original APEX deal.

The employers now say that they are not prepared to re-open negotiations and that the relevant clause in the June agreement is not legally binding.

On October 22 the company's executive management visited the plant and were forced to drive through a picket of APEX members who had taken the decision to call an unofficial one day protest strike.

Though the turnout was high, APEX is now to hold not a mass meeting but a ballot to decide whether to embark on all-out strike action, a work to rule and overtime ban, a series of one day strikes, or no action at all.

# Todd steps in

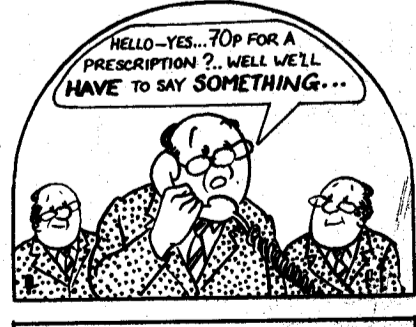
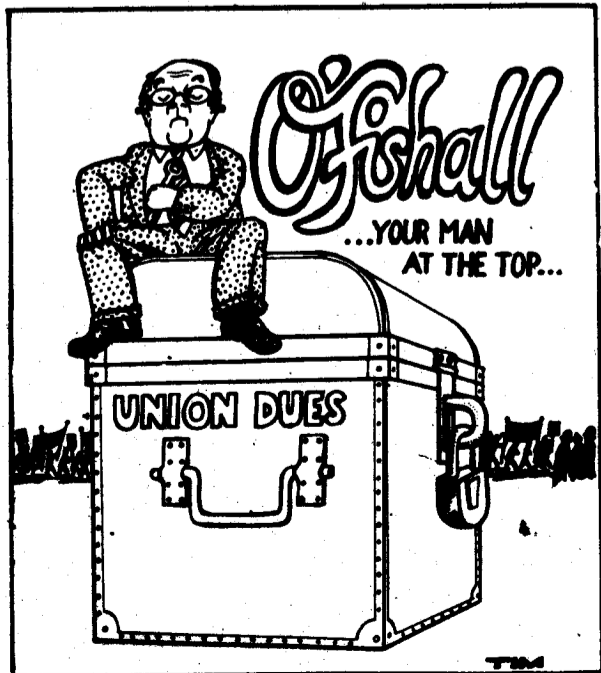
TGWU officials have rushed to assist Ford management break a picket line that had halted car assembly at Dagenham.

Transporter drivers from Toleman's had honoured a picket line by caterers at Dagenham—only to be refused payment by their employers.

They then took strike action—supported by shop stewards at Dagenham who refused to move cars from the assembly lines.

Rather than step in to ensure immediate victory to the Toleman drivers TGWU officials' first concern was to get the picket lifted and restore production at Dagenham.

Prime mover in this has been TGWU national organiser Ron Todd.



# SOCIALIST PRESS

## Corrie fight must link to cuts action

### BL: EDWARDES



## PUTS THE BOOT IN!

Following the announcement that the secret ballot of British Leyland workers had produced the planned result, the immediate response of BL chairman Michael Edwardes was to stick the boot in.

Only hours after gloating at his success, Edwardes was announcing the pay offer that is to be the next step in his war on jobs and working conditions.

The message to workers is plain. Give BL an inch, and they will take a yard.

Strengthened by the ballot result, Edwardes let out an immediate war cry.

Warning managers who might shrink from coming struggles, and witch-hunting militants who will be forced to

fight in defence of hard-won rights, an exultant Edwardes declared:

"If any manager, any shop steward or any employee doesn't like the heat in the kitchen, now is a good time to get out".

"This has shown that the shop stewards are a militant minority and that the loyalty of the labour force lies with the management."

Edwardes, who had himself had a vote in the ballot, waxed eloquent on the virtues of the secret ballot technique in which, he claimed, employees "vote privately in their own homes".

#### Propaganda machine

Of course in reality it is at home that workers are most subjected to the Tory propaganda machine—the press, the mass media, and the economic pressures of the family.

It is in "their own homes" that workers are forced to respond as individuals, and not as part of a class in struggle for its rights.

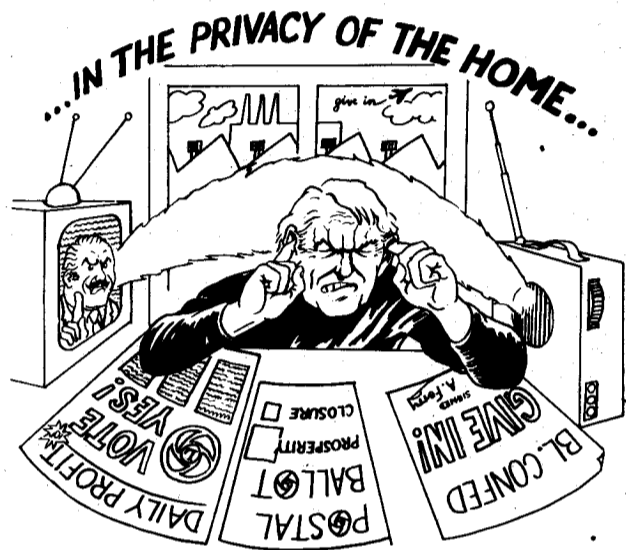
Even so, it is hard to understand the staggering 80% return on a postal ballot, and the sheer size of Edwardes' majority.

What is known however, is that for the first time the ballot forms carried no identifying number, and were printed and sent out exclusively by management.

Many ex-BL workers received forms: some employees received up to five. And every manager, supervisor and foreman could be counted on to return a Yes vote.

Now, to ram home his determination to witch-hunt militants, Edwardes has sent a

Cont'd page 11, col. 4



The giant TUC demonstration against John Corrie's Tory anti-abortion Bill may be over—but the Bill continues to grind through the Parliamentary machine.

The October 28 protest showed the determination of thousands of workers to defend the inadequate abortion rights that exist, and to extend them to achieve the right to free abortion on demand.

#### Back into the home

But under a Tory government hell-bent on driving working class women out of the workforce and into the isolation of the home there is no way such democratic rights can be achieved.

And with the deliberate run-down of the NHS already denying many women the opportunity of abortion within the existing time limits, the link between the fight against Corrie and the fight against the Tory cuts is inescapable.

Indeed, while we fully support the call for strike action to support a mass lobby of Parliament at the time of the Corrie Bill's Third Reading on 5 February, it is clear to all that the chances of widespread stoppages on the abortion issue alone are, to say the least, remote.

#### Central issue

It is vital, if the struggle is to be advanced, that the fight against Corrie is tied in concretely with the massive militancy on the cuts, and that union leaders are forced to raise the defence of abortion rights as a central issue in struggles to defend NHS facilities.

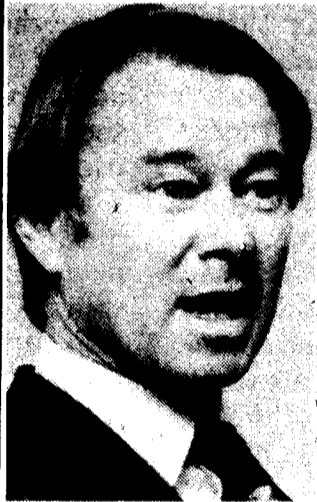
Health workers and all trade unionists must demand that February 5 be adopted by the TUC for a one-day strike as its much-promised "Day of Action" against the cuts, and that this incorporate a massive lobby of Parliament against the Corrie Bill.

At the same time preparations must be made to defend women's rights in the event of the Bill becoming law.

#### Disregard law

NHS unions, and doctors—who have almost universally condemned the Corrie Bill—must be called upon to adopt a policy of safeguarding existing abortion facilities, and disregarding the barbaric restrictions of the Corrie Bill whether or not it is passed in Parliament.

They must declare themselves ready to take all-out strike action in defence of anyone penalised by the state for carrying out an abortion—or to defend existing charitable abortion institutions threatened with legal attack.



Edwardes

## Conference on way forward

The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement held its fourth conference in Birmingham last weekend—the first to direct its aim at a Tory government.

The conference has adopted an action programme for raising questions of programme and leadership in the coming struggles (See page 4).

The programme is designed

for a practical intervention into the struggles of the working class—a point brought out by conference chairman Alan Thornett.

"We don't claim that the CDLM is a mass movement, but its significance is the serious need to discuss leadership in the working class."

#### International crisis

Tony Richardson, introducing the main resolution, stressed

that the attacks by the Tories were not a product of their dislike for the working class but were a material result of the international crisis of profitability that the ruling class is facing.

This applied to the anti-union laws, to the massive cuts in the social services and to the Corrie Bill.

The need is for a programme which can unify and generalise struggles, and to win the masses who were standing up and

saying that they wanted to fight.

The conference, attended by over 160 delegates and visitors, focussed on the struggle against the cuts, unemployment, the anti-union laws and on wages.

#### Demands

Meetings of the CDLM will be held in areas represented at the conference to campaign for the transitional demands embodied in its programme.

An amendment from Workers Power calling for preparation for the demand of a general strike against the Tories was accepted in outline.

Interventions are to be planned into the Stalinists' Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference and any future conference called by the Rank and File.

But the conference rejected a proposal that the CDLM should seek to organise a joint conference with the two bodies.

## Demonstrate to stop new racist laws

The final shape of the threatened Tory proposals to impose further racist curbs on immigration is still far from clear, even while isolated schemes emerge in the press.

But it is already clear that the new legislation will impose brazen racial discrimination by insisting that only women who can prove they were born in Britain will have the right to bring their husbands to live in this country.

The measure will have an insignificant affect on the numbers of immigrants allowed into Britain.

But by expressly excluding women who have lawfully settled in Britain from rights to be enjoyed by those born here the Tories deliberately place Asian women in particular in the category of "second class citizens".

As a serious step to restrict the already negligible flow of immigrants into Britain the new scheme is a non-starter.

Callaghan's reactionary Labour government had already imposed almost every conceivable restriction.

Its main purpose is clearly to appease the baying racists who cut up so rough at last month's Tory Party conference.

There, one after another, speakers echoing National Front phrases trooped to the rostrum and "moderates" from the Young Conservatives and Conservative Students were loudly heckled.

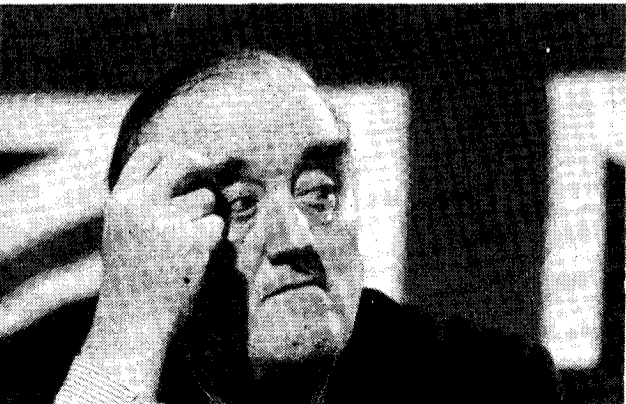
Though Tory platform

speaker Timothy Raison offered the racists little at the conference, the moves against Asian women are a means of throwing a little meat to the wolves.

It becomes more important than ever that the labour movement mobilise against these Tory attacks.

A national demonstration has been called for November 25, sponsored by a wide range of labour movement and anti-racist bodies. Socialist Press readers are urged to support.

National Demonstration  
Sunday 25 November  
Assemble 12 noon  
Speakers Corner, Hyde Park  
Stop the Tory Immigration  
Proposals and British  
Nationality Act!  
Repeal the 1971 Immigration  
Act!



Throwing meat to the wolves—Whitelaw

## FUND

Well the October fund closed well down at only £631.41 towards our target of £750. This is a situation that we have got to change quickly. In recent weeks planned price increases on such items as postage, telephones and rail fares, to name but a few, have all been announced. To meet these extra costs we need extra income, and that includes meeting the higher fund target.

The November fund has started at £120.20. Let's see if we can't reach our new fund target for the first time this month.

All donations should be sent to: Socialist Press Monthly Fund, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.